Religion and Life

Chapel Addresses given at the Meadville Theological School

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CHAPEL ADDRESSES BY
MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY OF THE
MEADVILLE
THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

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PREFATORY NOTE

This volume comprises addresses made by members of the teaching community of the Meadville Theological School. The authors are men who are exempt from every dogmatic constraint imposed by institutions and are accustomed to shape and to utter their convictions in the atmosphere of a chartered freedom. They are content with the natural and unforced unity which is born of a common purpose and a common method of considering the religious life. The methods and results of Biblical Criticism and of the critical historical study of all religions have become long since the law of their thinking. The volume is not designed to illustrate the negative tendencies of the critical spirit, but rather to give expression to the affirmative faith animating men habituated to such conditions of theological inquiry and so to evidence the present tone and spirit of this school of devout study. The selection of these addresses has been guided therefore not by the need of completeness in discussion, but by the practical desire to apply the religion of free inquirers to the hearts and lives of men.

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I

INTELLECTUAL VIRTUE

NICHOLAS PAINE GILMAN

INTELLECTUAL VIRTUE

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind."— MARK xii, 30.

I have chosen these words from Jesus' statement of the two great commandments as a text from which to discourse this evening on Intellectual Virtue. This is a portion of indivisible human virtue to which, in its larger aspects, preachers do not often attend; but to it the teacher of a complete ethic of life is bound to give a high place. They who assign it too low a place in their scheme of morals are wont to call any discourse upon it from the pulpit a "lecture" rather than a sermon. Such persons take too narrow a view of religion if they hold *that* only to be a sermon and appropriate to the pulpit which says, even to tedium, "Be good," and never informs us *how* to be good, more especially how to be good as intellectual beings. One may well retort to such criticism that much preaching would be better, i. e., more effective, more *good for something*, if it exhorted us more often to beware of evils largely mental in origin and character, such, for instance, as prejudice, narrow-mindedness, bigotry and partisanship. These are diseases of thought which corrupt life and vitiate real goodness of heart.

The wise writer of Jewish proverbs well said:

"As a man thinketh within himself so is he," good or bad, sound or unsound. Our New Testament writers, however, differed not only from the philosophy (i. e., the "love of wisdom") of the Greek, but also from the Old Testament type of religion in having comparatively little to say about wisdom or knowledge, and the pursuit of it, as a religious duty. Many of the Old Testament writers dwelt fondly upon "the wise man" and his excellences. They cannot speak too highly of him, and they employ very plain language about his opposite, the simple one, the unwise man, as they do not hesitate to call him frequently the "fool"— a man who may be very good in some moral ways, but is obviously, to the wise, not good for much, possibly almost good for nothing, because of his folly, his lack of intellectual worth, of thinking ability, of power to see straight, and reason clearly. But usually he can talk freely, however unwisely, and therefore the Book of Proverbs is led to say of him: "Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar with a pestle, among bruised grain, yet will not his foolishness depart from him." Such plain-speaking, and there is much of it in the Old Testament about this undesirable person in society, is exceedingly wholesome for all of us, especially for any who tend to identify goodness of heart with softness of brain. Yes, an occasional "lecture," if these persons will so name it, about the duty of having and being sound minds,

and using our minds morally, will do us good. Though the New Testament says little about such virtues, they are more and more needful in our modern life, and the lack of them spoils much of the goodness of the sentimentally good. A little heathen philosophy even, as distinct from religion, will serve to keep religion strong and pure: some bracing chapters from the Old Testament in praise of wisdom will greatly edify the Christian who is closely confined to a diet of "love." Sermons of this complexion are surely Biblical, and they hold to a part of the Bible which shows a vigorous racial life, not yet outgrown or supplanted.

A capable modern writer has distinguished three main directions in which "intellectual virtue" may be exhibited — in the *pursuit* of truth — in the *communication* of it to others, and in the *application* of it to life. It was this last kind of intellectual virtue that the writers of the Old Testament had most in mind when they spoke in praise of *prudence*, as when the prudent housewife is held up as an example, or the prudent man who foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, while the simple pass on and are punished. Higher in their estimation stood the wise man who knew many things, physical and social, and could therefore counsel sagely. No eulogy could be too high for the heavenly wisdom conversant with the many works of God, and able to advise us well how to lead our human life uprightly and

nobly. The application of truth to life, the turning of truth of word and of thought into truth of action is, indeed, its greatest transformation, its most needful use. The virtues shown in the *communication* of truth, such as truthfulness (i. e., veracity), candor, proper reserve, and consideration for the feelings of others, are largely personal in their direction, and they are not very often slighted by the Christian preacher.

On the other hand, some of the most important virtues to be shown in the *pursuit* of truth, such as impartiality, fair-mindedness, concentration, suspense of judgment in doubtful cases, non-partisanship and passion for reality find little favor in most of our churches, and often their plain opposites are actually encouraged, directly or indirectly. To be intensely sectarian is a form of zeal frequently fostered, as against simple fairness of mind; to be partisan, not to be just, is many times thought the chief concern: to be dogmatic is held far better than to refuse to be positive where you do not *know* and have no facts before you. It is to such goodness of mind as we mean by thoughtfulness, studiousness, judicial fairness, concentration, accuracy, and discrimination that I invite your attention chiefly to-night. The virtues of the mind, then, I would emphatically say, are as important as the virtues of the heart so-called, or the virtues of conscience so-called. Intellectual virtue is inextricably interwoven with heart and conscience, so that a man

cannot act justly without thinking wisely; he cannot be good without being sincere; he cannot be brave without concentration; he cannot be faithful without being accurate and single-minded. Turn these statements right about, and they will be just as correct. You cannot think wisely without acting justly; you cannot be sincere without being good; you cannot concentrate your powers without being brave; you cannot be accurate and single-minded without being faithful.

To be *virtuous*, as the word itself shows, is to be manly, or, to use a word more free from any insinuation even of sex, it is to excel, to be better, i. e., more competent, more able, more useful than common. Virtue is excellence; it is not necessarily strength. But this is a mistake too commonly made, and so the ordinary man, knowing that he has not a *strong* mind, is apt to disregard the fact that he *ought* to have a *good* mind so far as it goes, that he is bound at least to try to have a mind virtuous intellectually: that he should, in the first place, *esteem* intellectual virtue very highly and try hard to attain to it. He should not flatter himself that he can be a truly good man and think wretchedly and talk foolishly, from the standpoint of the really wise and sensible, and yet be just as good as they are. Our notions of virtue are apt to be very one-sided. If a man tells the truth, i. e., speaks what he supposes to be fact, the public is wont to call him a

good man: but he may have taken no pains to find out the truth, especially if the case be one a little off the track of ordinary interests. He may be very unteachable, very unwilling to learn of other men. And if he declares that he is following his conscience in a certain act and that this is the "voice of God" to him, most men will easily consent to call him a righteous man. So it has been in past times too much. Nowadays, however, we are getting over such irrational conceptions of conscience, and such really unworthy views of God speaking to man. Taking the broadly social view of human nature, rather than the narrowly individual view, we inquire about the intelligence of this person who complacently thinks himself inspired from on high, and we discriminate the spirits that may, in fact, control him — we distinguish the spirit of ignorance from the spirit of knowledge, the spirit of conceit from the spirit of respect for proper authority, the spirit of raw immaturity from the spirit of long experience. To lump your private ignorance, conceit and rawness, and call it the voice of God, is not religious but blasphemous, and the man of common-sense has the full right to name such a man a "fool" in the good Old Testament use of the word, and to set down such a conscience, in Ruskin's phrase as "the conscience of an ass." *Docility*, is, in order of time, if not in order of importance, the first of the intellectual virtues, to care for true knowledge, to want to

learn facts, to prize realities, and to respect those who appear to have found out the facts and to be in close touch with reality. Docility means a proper respect before those who *know* and before *what* they know — the humility of one who is well aware of the immensity of the universe, realizes how impossible it is for one person to know it all, and is completely willing, therefore, to regard expert testimony, the voice and the opinion of those who have specialized, who have cultivated their own garden intensively, and have made it bring forth fruit, many fold.

But Indocility stands at the threshold of the temple of knowledge, and cries aloud that he has nothing to learn; that what he knows is all that is worth knowing: that he cares neither for experience nor for history. The typical democrat, many thinkers have said, is such a man; having a vote in his hand which counts for as much as any other vote, and flattered by the demagogue, he rejoices *not* to know, and *not* to follow those who *do* know far more than himself. But, while this may be a common tendency in a democracy, human nature counts for more than any form of government, and human nature knows, in the long run, how to respect the strength of actual knowledge, to regard the real knowers and to follow the accomplished doers.

It is an intellectual vice for a man, on the contrary, to consider himself quite competent to get along without any help from experts or special-

ists, and to respect his own opinion about a water supply for a town, for instance, or about vaccination, or about "faith cure" more than the opinion of those who have long studied these matters, and have arrived at something that may well be called a scientific view of them. Consider the millions of people in this country who profess the faith of "New Thought," of "Christian Science," of "Spiritualism," and many another half-baked creed, and you will believe that it is chiefly a moral disease that affects them, a possession by the very contrary of the intellectual virtue of docility, the primary condition of intellectual sanity.

Fortunately we have in every school of the higher knowledge a persistent enemy, a sure destroyer in the end of intellectual vice which disregards the right ways of seeing a God of Fact. The ways have been learned by the sons of men through the long discipline of many ages and through hard thinking. In such schools of science we learn also the value of one of the most difficult of all the intellectual virtues, what the logicians call "suspense of judgment," what the plain man calls "not making up your mind too soon," what the lawyer would style "waiting for the facts to come in before rendering your verdict." Such waiting is a most painful process for the common mind. We naturally prefer the possible injustice, or falsity, of a quick decision, on the basis of a few facts, and many prejudices,

to the intellectual conscientiousness that *waits* for more light and the slower decision of a perfectly sober judgment. In personal matters we perceive with comparative readiness what a gross wrong it may be to set down a person accused of any moral offense as really guilty until he is proved to be an offender. How hard and how trying the burden of keeping our minds free from almost criminal prejudice on the one hand, and yet allowing fair weight to the evidence that is in at the time! Mental blindness from a bias against another of whom we know little — how unspeakably common that is; and how much less common, on the other hand, is prejudice in favor of one we know well, because of strong affection for him? Who can fail to see on slightest consideration how much this suspense of judgment is a matter of the fair intellect, of the mind consciously trying to work correctly, and to confine the feelings to their proper field of action in the sphere of proved reality! I would not underrate the complexity of such situations. They demonstrate how little help we get in our tangled life from general rules and abstract propositions; how very confused we often become before this or that particular case in concrete life. All such reflections go to convince us of the profound importance of suspense of judgment, where we have no *right* to decide, of the value of *waiting*, before believing at all.

Fairness of mind includes much more than this

suspense of judgment. It means ruling out all personal bias in disputed cases, the separation of the individual from his plea, the turning one's back upon personal sympathies and antipathies, and concentration upon the real merits of the case. Example is always better than precept in this direction. Well, then, take as a great example of fairness of mind the most human of all Americans, the great man whose centenary we are observing this year, Abraham Lincoln. Speaking of his uniform kindliness towards his political opponents, one of the best of his biographers says: "The absence of animosity and reproach as towards individuals found its root not so much in human charity as in fairness of thinking. Lincoln thought slowly, cautiously, profoundly, and with a most close accuracy, but above all else he *thought fairly.* This capacity far transcended, or more correctly, differed from, what is ordinarily called the judicial habit of mind. Many men can weigh arguments without letting prejudice get into either scale, but Lincoln carried on the whole process of thinking not only with an equal clearness of perception, but also with an entire impartiality of liking or disliking for both sides. . . . He had perfect confidence in the ultimate triumph of truth; he was always willing to tie fast to it, according as he could see it, and then to bide time with it." (Life of Lincoln, by John T. Morse, Jr., vol. I, p. 139.)

Closely akin to the intellectual virtue of refusing to believe on very insufficient evidence is another trait of high value to sanity of mind. This is thorough respect for the limitations of the human mind. So astonishing have been the achievements of the mind of man in the last century of the world's life, that we might perhaps be pardoned for sometimes thinking that nothing is safe against its assault. But the problems of another life and the nature of God are very different from those problems of Nature and History which have had so much light thrown upon them in the latest generations. Admiration of the positive achievements of the human mind may not properly go on to virtual denial of any limits to its powers. Nothing, in fact, is more essential to a balanced mind than a perception of the truth that man is a limited being, who should respect the confines of human intelligence, and not waste his life upon the unknowable beyond these confines, while such a universe of the knowable and the profitable to know spreads its myriad invitations all around him. And nowhere else has proper humility been so lacking to men as in the persistent attempts of theologians and philosophers to discover the undiscoverable, to give a working plan of the infinite and the absolute, to sound the depths of the mysterious and to scale the heights of the inexplicable. But, wherever he goes, the superheated searcher leaves the marks of himself, not of some other reality, re-

vealed. Everywhere he projects himself and admires what he sees. "Man," said Goethe in one of his wisest moments, "never knows how anthropomorphic he is." The most irrational even exalt their transient emotions to the very seat of Deity, and define Deity itself in pure terms of man. Such was not the way of Israel. As Matthew Arnold has said: "The spirit and tongue of Israel kept a propriety, a reserve, a sense of the inadequacy of language in conveying man's idea of God, which contrast strongly with the license of affirmation in our Western theology. . . . Say what we can about God, say our best, we have yet, Israel knew, to add instantly: 'Lo these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him! . . . Canst thou by searching find out God, canst thou find out the perfection of the Almighty? It is more high than heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know?'"

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind. Thou shalt believe in Him as the Highest Reason with all the Reason which thou hast thyself. With no slightest word shalt thou cast a slur upon what is most god-like in man: too much wilt thou fear the Nemesis which ranks all opponents or despisers of Reason with the insane. Thou shalt love God as Reason with all the service thou canst perform, in sound thought, and wise speech and well-considered action. Constant exercise in being reasonable, perpetual

strengthening of the power to reason well and clearly, steadfast submission to intellectual discipline, and continuous rational achievement in the individual and in the social life — this is true service and inferior to no other service of the God out of whose mighty intelligence our minds came, and in whom they subsist.

> "Our little systems have their day,
> They have their day and cease to be.
> They are but broken lights of Thee,
> And Thou art mightier, Lord, than they!"

In their brief day, Almighty God of Perfect Reason, Great Mind of the Universe, let their dominant tone be Reverence and Humility; so shall we not altogether fail of loving Thee with all our mind!

II

A DEFINITION OF RELIGION

WALTER C. GREEN

A DEFINITION OF RELIGION

The subject of my sermon is Religion, and I take as a text a definition given by Harnack, "Religion is to live in time for eternity, under the eye and with the help of God."

These words easily divide themselves into four parts. And the first part is to live. And what is it to live or what is life? We cannot easily define it or analyse it, but can simply say that it is something which we find here, and something which we did not and cannot create. We best know life in contrast with death. So perhaps we may have a better idea of what life is by asking what is the difference between the living and the dead? It is that a living thing can move itself while a dead thing cannot. The dead body of Daniel Clarke would have lain forever hidden from the curious eyes of neighbors if the living hands of Eugene Aram had not first touched it. That dead thing of its own accord would never have left the quiet pool of waters. This church building is a dead thing and would stay in this same spot and be the same a hundred years hence were it not for the snow and the sun, the rain and the wind. It is an easy division this, to divide the universe into the living and the dead.

And of all forms of life the highest type to my mind is man. For I believe that in spite of his possible degeneration, his occasional degradation,

and his unexpected reversions to type, man is at the summit of all created beings. Now what is the one quality that is denied to his little friends of the air, as Saint Francis of Assisi loved to call the birds, and to his two noble companions, the horse and the dog, that he enjoys? What one element has been put into his makeup but has been denied to the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air? I believe that is the soul. Some animals like the polar bear and the elephant may be stronger than man, some like the bloodhound, may be keener of scent, some like the gull may fly at an extremely fast rate, but none of these points of advantage can make up for the loss of a soul. For I believe that no animal has the mental power to grasp the idea of the abstract, or to think those thoughts that wander through eternity. You all remember the old saying, there is nothing great in the world but man, and that there is nothing great in man but mind, to which I would add, there is nothing great in mind but the moral and the religious life.

You are all familiar with the remark of Kant, that the two things that impressed him most were the movements of the heavenly bodies and the moral law. And here let me tell what I believe to be the essence of the moral law. First, a man must know the difference between the right and the wrong. For there are persons who do not. The idiot is not a moral being because he has an

undeveloped mind. The insane person is not a moral being because he has lost for a time the power to control his thoughts. The man with senile dementia is not a moral being because he has lost his mind. The newborn babe is not a moral being because its mind is not yet developed at all. But in the lifetime of every boy or girl there comes that psychological moment when he or she first distinguishes between the right and the wrong, and so becomes then and there a moral being. Sooner or later he or she sees the difference between the truth and the falsehood, between deceit and frankness. Your standard may be different from my standard, but let us ever bear in mind that we each have some standard of right and wrong and hence are moral beings.

Secondly, each person must be free to choose either the right or the wrong. We should not blame but rather pity the drunkard who has lost all power to refuse a drink, and can only grieve at the sight of an opium fiend unable to deny himself the deadly but desired drug. The choice must be a real choice, whether it is that of some poor college to accept tainted money or not, whether it is that of some ruined girl, to commit suicide or to live on in a life of misery, or of some neighbor, to repeat a bit of slander or to keep quiet forever.

For my part I believe that the moral life is of more importance than the material life. After a man has enough to eat and drink, a place in which

to sleep, a few changes of clothing, then the claims of his moral nature must be satisfied. All artistic, business, domestic, intellectual and social questions must be considered after the moral side has been considered. If the choice come to the small tradesman, to make a profit of six per cent. by just a little bit of misrepresentation of his goods, or of only making five per cent., let him take his five per cent., but be an honest man. If the moral side of a question is not satisfied, then all considerations of art and ease, social position and money income must be put aside. Let us then take this word life, in its moral aspect, as we repeat the words of our text, "Religion is to live in time for eternity, under the eye and with the help of God."

And what is the rule by which to carry out the moral law? The most simple yet the most perfect, one easy to put into practice to-day and good ten years hence; the one that was workable for the old Jews and that is still as workable for the Americans of to-day, is the Golden Rule, to treat our neighbors as we would be treated by them. It is not needful that we should be rich, or know a great deal, or read many books, or live in a model town, or on a certain street, or to wear strange clothes, or for all persons to live in one large house. All we need is to do as we would be done by. It means that if we were poor, should we like to have our children work in ill-ventilated factories, and if we are well off, why

should we want the children of our poor friends to work in these unhealthy places? It means that if we want to be treated with kindness and courtesy and consideration and to have our feelings regarded, we should regard the feelings of others. In short, to do as we would be done by, means that we must make our acts and our words and our gestures, even our very looks, such as we want to see in our families and friends and neighbors and even strangers.

The second part of our text is to live in time for eternity. What is the difference between living in time and living in eternity? May we not say that when we live in eternity that we live for a longer time and that we look further ahead? For instance, what would it mean if we were told by the Creator of the heavens and the earth, that every city built to-day would last for ten thousand years? Think of the result that would be made in the choice of building materials. For like good business men, we would ask what material would last the longest; cement, granite, marble or wood. We should then go to the pyramids of Egypt, or to the roads of Rome, or to the clay tablets of Assyria, for materials that would stand the ravages of time. What would be the result if every house and block and theater were built to last for hundreds of years? Should we not be careful to have no slums, to have abundance of light for every room in every tenement, to have plenty of parks and playgrounds, and to

lay out the city so that it would be a thing of beauty and so that all the buildings would harmonize into one? We should want a city that would be well-paved, well-lighted, with streets suitable for all purposes and with a beautiful skyline.

If the conviction that our cities are to live forever could make this great difference in our architecture, what a greater difference would be made in our characters, should we once believe that we are to live forever. We may say that it gives a seriousness to life. We should be more careful what we did were we obliged to remember it as long as we are alive. Let each one feel that he is to live for one hundred years! Should we not then lay up resources for our old age? Should we not ask whether the pleasures of the mind were more lasting than the pleasures of the body? Should we not see the folly of making enemies and of filling our minds with thoughts of unkindness and malice that would be unpleasant to look back upon in old age? The conviction that each man is to live for one hundred years would of itself change the reading tastes of many persons and might even lead us to change our trades and professions and callings. For the great thing in old age is to have nothing to regret. The great Daniel Webster, when a happy boy at college, if he had known that he would live to be old and well known, would have been more careful about his college life and so would have been

spared the mortification, when asked after he was famous, why he had left college, of simply saying, "It does not please me to remember." If the good people of Pennsylvania, had seriously thought how this state was going to go on forever, they would not have repudiated their debts, and would have spared the inhabitants of the present age the mortification that justly belongs to all who live in this state. There is something sad and pathetic in the story of Jacob, when he was asked by Pharaoh how old he was. For all that Jacob replied was, "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life." There can be few things for old persons more pleasant than to be able to look over a life that is spent and to find nothing to regret. And so this conviction that we are to live through childhood, manhood, old age, will deepen in us the seriousness of life and make us more ready to adopt the principle of never doing anything that would make us ashamed in later years.

And what shall we say when we ask about the life after death? I do not want to take the time to prove that there is or that there is not a life after death. I want to point out the advantage of believing that we shall live after death over the belief that we shall not live after death. And perhaps I can best express this advantage by saying that the belief in life after death gives a grandeur and a sweep and a breadth and a depth to our lives here, and the thought of which alone

in itself is uplifting. It means that a genius like Mozart has many lifetimes in which to grow and to increase in genius. It was said that if to make the most of one's abilities was to make one happy, then the painter Rubens was a very happy man, because he had made the very most out of his natural gifts. So it is fine to think that we shall have years without end in which to make the most out of all of our natural gifts and abilities, and perhaps time in which to have new ones given to us. It gives a sweep to life such as nothing else can give, to feel that the zeal and the self-sacrificing power of martyrs and philanthropists, and of preachers and of teachers is to continue. It gives us encouragement to believe that the zeal of John Howard for the reform of prisons, the power of a Wendell Phillips, and the persuasive power of a Phillips Brooks and the sweet influence of a Horace Mann are so much solid force that, while no longer with us, is to continue under new conditions and to bring forth good. Just as Abraham Lincoln would have done had he lived in the time of George Washington, and as George Washington would have done had he lived in the time of the civil war; so both of them and many others are doing good in the world in which they are now.

We sometimes think of the ones gone before as being the same, as when we last saw them, and never changing, but surely they must live under the same law of spiritual growth as we do, for the

universe is one and governed alike. This gives a breadth to this life here and now, because this means that we shall meet those in the land to come who are enemies and rivals and bitter foes. For if we shall live in eternity, so must others, and if some, why not all, and if all, why not those who hate us and despise us and even injure us? To meet the hated and despised ones in that unknown land will be like our going forth into a fine banquet hall and being compelled to sit down in the presence of all, side by side with those hating us. If this be true, surely it were wise to make good friends of our enemies, and to make few, and better yet, none, in the days to come.

And this same belief that we are to be the children of continuous time gives a depth to some of our earthly feelings and affections that no other belief can give. Few convictions need to be more carefully taught to children, need to be more persistently cherished, and can give greater satisfaction than this, that we are to mingle with those who have passed on. Unless we are to mingle with those who have solved the great mystery of life, the time will never come, of which the poet spoke,

"Where the love that here we lavish,
On the withering leaves of time,
Shall have fadeless flowers to fix on,
In an ever spring-bright clime.
There we find the joy of loving,
As we never loved before,

Loving on, unchilled, unhindered,
Loving once, and forever more."

Religion has, I believe, lost some of its stirring power, because it does not lead men and women to feel that they are to live through years that have no limit, and because it has failed to insist that death is only a doorway between the living and the dead. Some of us once thought of the dead as living one kind of life and ourselves as living another. Rather let us grasp the idea of the hymn, written by Charles Wesley,

"The saints on earth and those above,
But one communion make,
Joined to their Lord in bonds of love,
All of his grace partake."

What an inspiring thought that some time all the limitations of age and color and family and friendship and nationality and sex shall vanish, and that we all shall see each other and ourselves as we are now seen by the Creator of Space and the Source of Time! It means that the whole human race, past, present and future, is all one, and that death is but a gateway.

One family we dwell in him,
One church above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.
One army of the living God,
To his commands we bow,

Part of the host have crossed before,
And part are crossing now.

We know that we are all amounts of energy, and as we believe in the conservation of all energy in the physical world, so the time is coming when we shall believe in the conservation of all energy, human and spiritual, physical and mental, angelical and divine. This belief in the continued personal identity can alone explain why we have certain longings and aspirations which here can never reach their fulfilment, but require an endless opportunity. The belief in immortality is an instinct deep rooted that will never die. In short, I believe that if the whole civilized world were to try to teach their children that there is no life beyond the grave, still this deepseated and divinely planted instinct would assert itself, and the coming generations would soon believe with all fervor and with an unshakable zeal that they were to live forever in time and forever in eternity.

But some one may say, cannot the atheist live this same kind of a life? I am willing to admit that it is possible, but not so probable. Nay, I believe that it is harder for the atheist than for the believer in a god. In the same way, I believe that there cannot be any religion without a god. This is the next point to be covered in the definition of Harnack, " Religion is to live in time for

eternity, under the eye and with the help of God."

Sooner or later every serious thinking person faces the question, Is there a God? and do I believe in him? Some fortunate persons have been so brought up that they say without stopping, I do. But many others, less fortunate, have been moved by agnostic influences and atheistic tendencies and are in doubt. Suffice for the present by the word God, we mean that power that is outside of us, that is behind and within the world. We may believe that He is pure spirit, or, like the theologians of old, we may give Him the attributes of omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience, or we may simply feel that He is the heavenly father, or a good shepherd, or a kind king, or the absolute judge, or the great forgiver.

While I may admit that the atheist may be as kind a neighbor and as honest a business man as the believer in God, yet I do firmly believe, all things being taken into account, that there will be found more sweetness and kindness and loveableness among those believing in God than among those who do not. The believer lives in a world of two dimensions, if we may use the term. He sees and feels and knows that above and behind and within and underneath this world is another mind, of the same kind as his own, though infinite in makeup. The atheist is like a mountain climber, cold and hungry and lonely and

tired, coming upon some house in which he can pass the night in peace and comfort. He would be a strange traveler who never asked who put the house there, and he would be also an ungracious traveler who did not leave it in fairly good shape for the next person who was cold and hungry and lonely and tired. To the atheist must it not seem strange that questions of why and whence and whither should daily arise, and must it not seem a queer thing that there is not a savage tribe but believes in some kind of a god, however low or degraded? To the atheist the feelings of reverence and adoration and awe and worship which he sees in others must seem queer and meaningless. I believe that were children left alone to themselves, like Paul and Virginia, they would soon come to feel that there was a larger life outside of themselves and including themselves. Like the two children in Nathaniel Hawthorne's The New Adam and Eve, they would feel by instinct, without knowing why, what emotions a beautiful cathedral was built to express, or gazing upon the storm at sea, would feel the grandeur of the power behind the storm, or looking at the grand cañons of Colorado, would have feelings of awe. What carpenter building a house for himself in some pioneer country does not feel at times that this earth is but a larger house built by some giant hand, or what mother, watching the daily growth of her first child, does not now and then feel that she herself is but a child of the

Infinite Mother! Do we not feel that it is natural for man to believe in a god and that he needs God as much as he needs air to breathe and water to eat? God and man are thus bound together, each needing the other and each lacking something without the other. What a lonely world this would be if there were no God, and what a lonely being God would be were there no human beings of divine origin, human limitations, and great possibilities!

But after a man has said, I believe in God, the next and most important question comes up, In what kind of a god do I believe? Time does not permit us to examine all the attributes of deity, but let us look at the one suggested by this definition of Harnack, "Religion is to live in time, under the eye and with the help of God." We may have heard these words so often and have read them so often that they have at first but little meaning for us. The eye of God! What sins would we not avoid were we to feel for one single second that the eye of God was upon us! The start we give when we think we are alone, but find some one is with us, typifies in a slight degree the complete conversion that can come upon a man when he realizes that God sees everything that he does. How ashamed we should be if all at once all our thoughts and feelings were known to those who are about us. What emotions of hate and revenge and jealousy would at once go from our minds were they seen

by our friends! What shudders come upon us at times in the lands of dreams when we have those frightful thoughts, which we dare not think again, which are the creatures of a fevered imagination, which we feel in our better moments are not a part of ourselves and for which we will not feel responsible. And yet this feeling would be mild compared to those feelings if our friends and loved ones were to know our innermost thoughts and wishes. And yet God sees them all before they come. With God we must think of One to whom the past and present and future are all one and the same, and for whom Time does not exist when He reads the motives and wishes of His children.

And if Time vanishes under the all-seeing eye of God, so must space. We may have some idea of what it means to live under the all-seeing eye of God, if we take the analogy of the Roman citizen banished from the Roman empire in the golden age of the Emperor Augustus. The whole civilized world was under Roman rule, and when once the unfortunate citizen was banished from the eternal city, he had to go out among the barbarians of the north, or the uncivilized races of South Africa, or away among the unknown tribes of the east. We can believe that in some cases death was preferred to banishment. For if ever the man should try to return, the Roman centurion waited for him either at the Euphrates River, or at the Cataracts of the Nile, or at the

borders of the Black Sea. So would it be were we to try to banish ourselves from the sight of God. For He is everywhere. He sees all things at once, both cause and effect, rest and motion, change and decay.

Some of you may have read years ago that little old pamphlet called the Stars and the Universe, wherein the author showed how in an infinite lens all the rays of light crossed at one point and how all the images might shrink until the whole universe would be condensed into one minute point, and this one point, the smallest conceivable point, would still contain the universe, and thus the all-seeing eye of God would become a physical and literal possibility. It was a fine idea and well worked out, and showed how to the Infinite One both time and space were not necessary.

Perhaps we of to-day would be more helped toward a belief in the physical all-seeing eye of the Ancient of Days by thinking of the X-rays. Surely if finite beings can look through a purse and see the coins inside of it, why should we hesitate to believe that the Infinite and Absolute One sees all things, hidden and open?

But after all it is not the physical all-seeing eye of God that should interest us, but rather the spiritual all-seeing eye. For we must think that God sees all things as we see an image in the mind's eye. And what comfort there is in this conviction that all our thoughts are seen by Him

who inhabiteth eternity. What a steadiness of nerve and irresistible flood of moral enthusiasm this must have brought to the New England worker for the abolition of slavery, as he felt that he was right, and could cry out, "One with God is a majority." It was this conviction that she was under the all-seeing eye of God that enabled the Scottish maiden, fastened to the stake at low tide, to sing the praises of her Creator, as she felt the tide was coming in upon her. It was said that the secret of the success of the great Napoleon was that he could make every soldier feel that he was carrying a marshal's baton in his knapsack, and that if he did his duty, the cross of the Legion of Honor was his, and fame and rank and glory were before him. So the true soldier of God feels that the eye of God is upon him, and that no task can be too great and that no temptation can be too hard to bear.

These words, "under the eye of God," will of course suggest different things to different persons, according to the profession they follow. To the physician they may suggest that God is an infinite physician, to whom all diseases and sicknesses and the frame of man are perfectly known, and who alone can cure all ills of body and soul, head and heart, flesh and spirit. To the lover of knowledge, these few words suggest that God knows all languages, all tongues, all subjects, all books, even those yet to be written. To the scientist looking at the fishes in an aquarium,

watching and studying their variety, both of color, size, shape and beauty and even ugliness, there would come the thought that to the Omniscient One all these things have a distinct purpose, and that to him there is no problem of origin of species and variations. To the astronomer looking upon the stars, millions upon millions, innumerable by numbers that have a name, there would come the conclusion that under the all-seeing eye of Him who is without variableness or shadow cast by turning these planets and stars and suns and universes at each and every moment represent a distinct thought of God, even as the pages of the Bible tell of Elijah and Elisha. To the lawyer, the all-seeing eye of God would suggest, what is the hope and yet the unattainable aim of man, a perfect jury and a perfect judge. To some railroad engineer, these five words would suggest that each man was like a train, with records kept at some gigantic headquarters, some infinite train-despatcher's office. There all is put down in black and white, there the man of industry is like the train always on time, the young man, ruining his life with drink, like the train wrecked and off the track, while the man with great gifts, which he has neglected, is like a train, snowbound, overcome and useless in the drifts of indolence and moral weakness.

But in this analogy of the train, let us remember that the engineer is not only under the eye of the train-despatcher, but that at any moment he

may receive warning of dangers, with orders to obey. So it is with us, and this leads us to the last part of this definition of religion, given by Harnack, "Religion is to live in time for eternity, under the eye and with the help of God."

For this is the greatest possible conviction that can ever come to any human being — that he is living with the help of God. God not only sees the martyr Ridley, burning at the stake, but can help him bear those flames. God not only saw the Jesuit missionary being tortured by the North American Indians, but could cause him to rejoice in his tortures for the glory of God. And God alone can sustain a poor and lonely mother left with her children to support. God is something more than an all-seeing eye to the moral reformers, wearing out body and soul, in almost hopeless struggle with the wrong, but with the conviction and a zeal that their fellow-persecutors might well envy.

This conviction that we are to live with the help of God, is the crowning glory of religion, and leads us to answer the last question, how may God help us?

I believe that God may help us in different ways. He may help us when He speaks through the voice of conscience, as when the mother of Theodore Parker said to him —"Some men call it conscience; but I prefer to call it the voice of God in the soul of man. If you listen and obey it, then it will speak clearer and clearer and al-

ways guide you right; but if you turn a deaf ear or disobey, then it will fade out little by little, and leave you all in the dark and without a guide. Your life depends on your heeding this little voice."

God may help us when we insist upon speaking the whole truth and nothing but the truth, no matter what may happen, as in the case of the Persian —

"Ottaya from his earliest youth,
Was consecrated to the truth,
And if the universe must die,
Unless Ottaya told a lie,
He would defy the fate's last crash
And let all sink to one pale ash,
Or ever from his truthful tongue
One word of falsehood should be wrung."

God helps us when we persist in obeying those deepseated feelings of innate goodness, and when we demand that what is imperfect in us must not be held to be perfect in Him. As the poet Whittier said:

"Not mine to look where cherubim,
And seraphs may not see,
But nothing can be good in Him
Which evil is in me.

The wrong that pains my soul below
I dare not throne above,
I know not of His hate — I know
His goodness and His love."

God helps us when we read inspiring passages in great books, like the gem of Saint Paul's writings, the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians —" Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal."

The beauty and essence of this help from God is that it may be direct. The traveler shipwrecked upon a lonely island, or the reformer in the Russian cell, can receive that help as quickly as a worshiper in some Gothic cathedral. The repentant woman, cast out by the world, alone and deserted, may receive that help as soon as her happier sister in the gay Easter service, and may even say, like Hagar of old, " Because the Lord hath heard my affliction."

We need no priest nor minister, though they be saintly men, for each one of us may be his own priest, and at any moment, inside or outside of the church, may say in all sincerity that simplest prayer of all simple prayers, the shortest and yet the most acceptable, " God be merciful to me, a sinner." There is no need of an elaborate ritual, for it may be that we shall be alone and in a strange land, when, like the Prodigal Son, we come to ourselves.

And in answering this last question of all questions, How God helps us, let us cast away all sectarian narrowness, all personal prejudice, and all denominational illusion, and see that God helps each one in a different way. As has been well said,

no one church has a monopoly of the holy spirit. The saying of a beautiful and hallowed ritual may have an irresistible uplift for him who has been brought up within its traditions, while the jangling tune of a Salvation Army song may lead some tramp to seek light, who would be entirely unaffected by the most beautiful ritual that man may compose. And the words of the first hymn we learned in our innocent childhood days at our mother's knee may yet awaken in us the expulsive power of a new affection.

I believe in conclusion that the highest way in which God helps us is when He speaks to us through some personality. When we look at the self-sacrificing love of the one who bore us, or remember the upright life of him whose name we bear, or think of some noble friend who has helped us, or think of how our life is sweetened by the daily companionship of some unselfish loving consort, or think of some elder brother, like the Man of Galilee, then do we receive the greatest help from God, and understand best what it means to live with Him. And then, remembering how we have received so great a gift from those who have gone before, our respect to them, and our thankfulness to God, demand that we transmit this gift of all gifts to others, not only untarnished, but made more inspiring to those yet to come.

III

UNIVERSALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT

GEORGE L. CARY

UNIVERSALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT

What we are so fond of saying, that no two men are alike, is no more true than its exact opposite, that no two men are different. The likeness both mental and physical between men is fundamental and permanent; the differences, however obtrusive they may be, are accidental and to a great extent shifting and transient. That a man is a man gives perfect assurance of his possessing every distinctive attribute of humanity. Completely lacking but one such characteristic, he would be either a brute or something between brute and man; gaining but one altogether new power, he would be an angel of some degree. Once determine by an exact analysis what are all the essentially different ways in which the mind of man can display its activity, and the sum of the powers thus manifested must be considered as constituting universal human nature. It is on this account, as well as others, and in a unique sense, that man can fitly be called a microcosm — a little universe, there being in every man all the possibilities of the race.

But this homogeneity, this absolute oneness of constitution, is no special characteristic of humanity; it is the law of all created things after their several kinds. Every particle of gold has all the essential qualities of every other particle;

every ounce of water is always just so much hydrogen and oxygen, never more nor less of these, and never, by any possibility, anything else; every form of animal and vegetable life has its own unvarying constitution, fixed forever by the law to which it owes its existence. This is, in brief, a universe of kinds, or, stated more concretely, of kinds of things, and not, primarily, of individuals infinitely diverse. Not otherwise than thus is it conceivable that a world of life and order could exist. Isolation is death, and the possibility of a human life such as we now live is dependent upon the actuality of a human nature which knows no variation except within the comparatively narrow limits of unessential forms.[1]

If the essential principles of the doctrine which we are presenting are not universally accepted, it is partly at least because of a failure to discriminate between what is actual and what only potential in man, or between a weak and unobtrusive and a full and strong manifestation of a power. Thus a man is often said to have no ear for music, who is merely unable to enjoy its more complex forms; or to have no voice for singing, when he has never made any serious effort to train the vocal powers which he has possessed from infancy. Sometimes one denies to

[1] Plato held that of every created thing there is an image or prototype or "idea" in the Divine mind, and that these are the only permanent realities.

others the possession of the ability which he himself lacks or seems to lack; as when a person who delights only in simple melodies declares that it shows affectation to claim to enjoy the more varied and elaborate music of the oratorio or the opera. There are a few people, having some pretension to sound judgment in general, who speak with the utmost disdain of the old masterpieces of pictorial art, and a considerable multitude who really derive from these works no true enjoyment; but such inconsiderately set up their own immaturity as a standard by which to judge the full-grown, when they declare that the beauty which they do not see has no real existence. It is one of the most striking characteristics of ignorance and inexperience that they imagine the world to be bounded by their own narrow horizon. If the sightless fishes of the Mammoth Cave were possessed of powers of reasoning analogous to our own, they would be in great danger of judging that those of their tribe living in other waters were altogether endowed and circumstanced like themselves. And yet these blind cave-dwellers have rudimentary organs of vision, either never developed or now atrophied through lack of use. In a stream whose depths were pierced by the sunlight, their disability might sometime disappear. In nature's plan, every organ, whether of body or mind, begins to exist in advance of a demand for its use. We are not questioning now what

was the origin of nature herself; we are only declaring her present workings. The delicate cell-tissue of the lungs of the unborn babe unconsciously anticipates the incoming breath of life; the eye blindly prepares its camera for forms and tints and shades of whose beauty the yet sleeping soul dreams not; the chambered ear prepares to receive the music of nature's choral, when as yet no wave of sound has vibrated through its winding passages and empty halls.

And so it is with man's higher powers. Only by slow degrees does the soul come to full self-consciousness. "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." The physical and even the mental development of childhood into manhood is a patent enough fact; it is the possible fulness of the expansion of the soul which few — we must even say none — adequately comprehend. We read Paul's confession, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things," comprehending imperfectly enough both the kind and the degree of the change to which he wished to testify. "Arrested development" is the phrase which, better than any other, describes the condition of the vast majority of men. The old adage, "Men are but children of a larger growth," is more seriously true to the fact than we are wont to realize. Men in stature and in years, we are content to be children in

many of the characteristics of complete manhood. We pity him who, from accident of birth or some untoward circumstance in life, lacks the full physical endowment of manhood; while, at the same time, we are so heedless of our own condition as to take little thought for the culture of those higher powers which, more truly than in the case of the bodily faculties, no mere undirected vegetative growth can ever bring to their due perfection.

If the truth of these two related affirmations has been sufficiently established, namely, that whatever elementary powers are manifested in any man are a part of the endowment of the race, and consequently that no man altogether lacks any such power which is possessed by any other man, then we are prepared for this corollary, that, granting the religious sentiment to be both unique and non-composite and therefore incapable of resolution into simpler elements, it must be held to be universal, whether universally manifested in a recognizable form or not. Here again we waive, as unnecessary, the question of origin and derivation, discussed in our day with such a wealth of theory and such a dearth of well-digested facts, and rest in the testimony of the developed consciousness to the existence of a religious faculty in man. This fact, moreover, may be sufficiently proved historically; since the negative testimony of those few Christian travelers in the earth's darkest corners, who declare

that they have met with races altogether devoid of the religious instinct, counts as nothing against otherwise universal experience, especially considering how unfit these observers have often been to recognize devotion in strange and unfamiliar forms. Not thus blind was the clear-eyed Apostle to the Gentiles when he declared at Athens that God " made of one every nation of men,"— not of " one blood," as some well intentioned interpolator, failing to grasp the apostle's idea of a *moral* unity, and apparently not comprehending the abstract form of statement, makes the passage to read in the version with which we are most familiar.

The present century is witnessing a remarkable transformation. Our forefathers, inheriting that Hebrew lack of discrimination which recognized no degrees between highest and lowest but made everything to be either all good or all bad, divided the religions of the world into two sole classes — the true and the false, in the former including only Judaism and Christianity. Some of the early Christian fathers, with an evident sense of the injustice of excluding from the kingdom of God the Athenian Socrates and his like, and yet not daring to break down altogether the hitherto fixed barrier between true and false religion, with charming illogicalness claimed that these pagan saints were real Christians. It has been left for our own time to approximate, however imperfectly, to a realization

of the truth that in no age or clime has God left himself without a true witness in the heart of man.

Two errors have lain at the foundation of the condemnation as false of all religions but one (for Judaism and Christianity have been looked upon as virtually one), the confusion of religion and theology, and the ignoring of the necessary imperfection of every human conception of the divine and the consequent inevitable diversity of the forms of religious thought. While there is really but one religion, there are as many theologies as there are thinking and reasoning beings. Religion is the life-blood of theology, the latter being, as it were, only the system of arteries and veins through which the vital current courses on its way to and from the beating heart. Some theology there must be to furnish a channel for these tides of devout feeling; but the stream and the channel are not one. Neither is it of the first importance of what sort the channel may be, so that it carries with some degree of safety what is committed to it. Theologies may be very imperfect and yet quite well worth the having for those who as yet are fit to make use of nothing better. The soul of truth in things accounted false should save from our scorn the mean and tawdry shrine which the owner of the jewel within knew not how to replace with a worthier casket.

Great as is the present activity of religious

thought in many directions, no department of theological learning is making more rapid advances than that of the comparative study of religions. It marks a most striking change of attitude on the part of the teachers of Christianity, that so many schools of preparation for the ministry have of late deemed it necessary to introduce into their course of theological instruction a more or less thorough and sympathetic treatment of all the leading forms of non-Christian faith. Eminent Christian scholars, too, think it not unworthy of them to devote their lives to the revival and popularization of the old religious literature of the East, with a zeal no less ardent than that which has prompted others to the exclusive study of their own sacred scriptures. No library of theology is to-day considered adequately furnished which does not give ample place upon its shelves to the remains of those literatures which have embalmed for us the noblest religious thoughts of centuries dim with age when Christianity was born. It is a fact of no small significance that the only published work of one of the most popular of our American theologians for which there has been a remunerative demand is Dr. James Freeman Clarke's ample treatise on the "Ten Great Religions of the World." It was fitting that such a work should come from a source pledged to the fullest recognition of religious truth in all its forms.

Perhaps the most striking evidence of the recent growth of religious hospitality is to be found in the provision which was made for a "World's Parliament of Religions" in connection with the "World's Columbian Exposition" in the city of Chicago a few years since. It is a fact of the greatest interest to all who believe in the brotherhood of the race, that there has now been presented for the first time in the history of the ages the spectacle of a wide-spread practical recognition of the fact that all the religious faiths of the world have their common root in the essentially religious nature of man. The few who followed the then Archbishop of Canterbury in keeping aloof from this truly Catholic movement on the ground "that the Christian religion is the *one* religion," and that nothing else called by the name is entitled to any respectful recognition, are on the way to creating for themselves an isolation from which they may sometime be glad to escape into the freer air of universal fellowship.

That which will render possible at any time a true œcumenical parliament of religion will be an adequate appreciation of the fact that whatever is a part of the universal endowment of the race must be simple and unvarying in its essential nature and fluctuating only in its accidental and therefore unessential forms. There will be wide-spread religious union only when the conception of religion is reduced to its lowest terms.

The fewer the points upon which agreement is sought in anything, the more numerous the chances always are of securing the desired harmony. The nature of an ultimate faculty of the soul can never be adequately set forth in words, and its workings must be actually felt in order to be understood. If we define religion as a feeling of reverence for that which is higher than we, while we doubtless leave out some things which are yet generally considered to be of the very essence of religion, we speak of that which all who recognize its existence will acknowledge to be the essential part of it. Neither can we add anything whatever to this simple characterization without inviting marked dissent from some quarter or other. If the religious sentiment is innate and therefore universal, its constant and ample manifestation is not to be looked for, but we must rather expect it to be often met with in very rudimentary forms, and sometimes even to be so undeveloped or so atrophied as to give no sign of its existence. Let us be careful to deny to no one the name of religious — even to him who, because of his misunderstanding the true meaning of the word, would impatiently reject its application to himself. We are to remember that there are many ideals short of the highest, and that he who worships not the name of God may, like the great French positivist, really worship Him in the crowning glory of His creation.

If religion be truly represented as being na-

tive to the soul, then they do not speak wisely who talk of " getting religion," as though it were something to be acquired from without, instead of a wholly natural life, to be developed from within. Neither does this mistaken thought gain in essential rationality by being clothed in the ill-fitting garb of physical science, as in Professor Henry Drummond's " Natural Law in the Spiritual World "— a book which for a decade seemed to so many to be a firm prop for a doctrine widely felt to be sadly in need of new supports. The author frankly acknowledges that a thousand modern pulpits every seventh day are proclaiming the natural development of the spiritual life instead of its supernatural communication, and that, to quote his exact words, " the finest and best of recent poetry is colored with this same error "— error to him, but God's truth to him who listens with attentive ear to the inner voice. Although evidently unaware of his dogmatic bias, his real bondage to the creed plainly discovers itself in his statement that this new conception of the religious life " is founded upon a view of its origin which, if it were true, would render the whole scheme [of salvation] abortive." Pleased with his supposed discovery of a way to convert science from an imagined enemy into an ally of Christian faith, he fails to see that he is trying to lighten his ship by cutting adrift the lifeboat instead of lowering the anchor. A professed evolutionist, to whom

the continuity of law is almost an axiom, he hastens to sacrifice his fundamental principle and to introduce a violent break into the order of nature, for the sake of securing a longer lease of life for the blasphemy which denies that God is the father of *all* His children and that His spirit dwells in every human heart.

But, as already suggested, the religious life, like the intellectual, although spontaneous in its origin and the most natural of all things, is not sure of attaining to its normal growth without careful nurture, that "nurture of the Lord" which the writer of the Epistle must have assumed to have moulded the lives of the men and women of Ephesus upon whom he enjoined such watchful care for the religious growth of their offspring. If in every human soul *religion* and *life* are one and inseparable, then there can be no more pressing duty to one's self than to cherish the realization of this union, and no dearer office of friendship than to seek to aid our brother in his search for this sacred bond.

IV
THE PRESENT GOD

FRANK C. DOAN

THE PRESENT GOD

I

There is one conviction of the inner life to which we men of religion must commit our spirits absolutely and unreservedly. It is the sense of God's real presence in our human lives. Men have defined the spirit of God in a thousand ways. A man of science seeks an adequate expression of God in terms of physical majesty: God is the infinite energy present in unthinkable intensity in the great teeming cosmos round about us. The man of philosophy expresses God in terms of spiritual majesty: God is infinite Spirit interpenetrating and transfiguring the machine we call the world. The man of sorrow finds God a spirit acquainted with grief; the man of joy, a spirit of infinite gladness; the man discouraged by the hard pressure of life upon him finds in God a spirit of infinite restfulness and unconquerable confidence; the man of unholy passion attains some day in God a life of perfect purity; the man of impatient spirit, a life of infinite patience. And so the tender life of God unfolds itself in infinite ways in the lives of us human beings.

II

Now, it is the *genuineness*, the reality and certainty of this divine presence in our human life

that I want to make clear in these moments of our meditation together. I have known many wavering men who have felt this world-old call of the divine life in their souls but who have been either too timid or too perplexed to yield to its eternal pressure upon their lives. In their timidity of spirit they have seemed to themselves to be unworthy of the divine presence, unable to live every moment unashamed in the sight of God. Or they have been too perplexed by the rudeness and crudeness of the world of men round about them to believe that humanity is indeed and in truth the garment of a great inner divinity.

Yet this timidity and confusion of spirit always fade away in the light of a great experience of God. In meditation upon the presence of God in the human race, in meditation upon the saintly men and women who all through the ages have trusted in God and were not ashamed, in meditation upon the burning, commanding spirit of God discovered by those who have stood upon mounts of vision far above men and worlds of men — one cannot doubt that God is! Our timidity becomes childish, our perplexity merely a defect of our poor, finite humanity. One may at last overcome this childishness and finiteness of his humanity and himself stand forth in the light of the ages, stand forth like a man! In this great experience of the infinite spirit of God a man discovers for the first time and for all

eternity that his own human manhood is everlastingly justified and dignified by the infinite and invisible Manhood of God.

We ought to be very quiet and reverent and solemn now, for here we stand in the presence of one of the everlasting mysteries of God. Here we may learn in silent meditation the way of the great overbrooding spirit of God. It is not the way of childish timidities nor of hopeless perplexities of spirit. We must learn, sooner or later, that the great spirit of God cannot yield itself wholly to our human life, cannot wholly put on the perfect humanity for which the infinite heart of God is eternally crying out until the human spirit at whose portals the divine spirit is ever waiting calls out openly, honestly and manfully "O God, if thou be, enter my life and make it wholly thine; make it infinitely pure, infinitely alive to that life of triumphant righteousness and love in which alone thy divine life can realize its infinite humanity." Lay bare your spirit before this living God, put aside the very sandals of your soul and stand naked in spirit and unashamed in the presence of God and the great spirit of God will surround and invade your being with an almost terrifying certainty. The timidity and perplexity of your earlier search for God will remain only as the memory and symbol of your own imperfect humanity. You will have learned for all eternity the invisible, unconquerable humanity of God.

This, I say, is the eternal mystery of the divine life: that in the very hour when the human soul gives itself up absolutely to the awful infinity of God's being it comes to know something of the infinite humanity of God. In abandoning one's self wholly to the being of God one finds that in an infinitely mysterious way the divine life is human, that the very inmost being of God is reaching out infinitely toward all that is deepest and intensest and noblest in the life we call human. The soul's communion with God when the spirit of God unobstructed by human hesitations and withdrawals completely invades our human life — it is the hour when we see our human life in its infinite dimensions, the hour when we know the invisible humanity of God.

Too often men have supposed that the point of contact between humanity and God is reached by the throwing out of many, magnificent phrases, such as omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence and the like, when all along the human spirit has stood ready and eager to believe in these immense realities of God if only they could be realized in our poor, human life. Just *how* is the infinite power, the infinite wisdom, the infinite presence of God to move within the narrow confines of our finite humanity? Do not the very terms of our deification of God estrange Him from the trials and errors and sorrows of our human lives?

In these quivering questions of poor humanity

I always seem to hear the sad voice of a human soul crying out for the living God. "Oh, that I could find God; the living God! I am weary of men's faint descriptions of God. I want God, a patient and hopeful God whose infinite being is all alive with the hopes and passions of our human life, whose power and presence are engaged with men in the way of righteousness and love, whose infinite being is daily, hourly putting on the garments of Humanity."

I talked the other day with a noble man who is spending the strong years of his life working in city missions. He is trying to redeem human life at just those points where the divine life is threatened by apparently incurable diseases of sin. He told me of a man whom he had seen arise and fall again and again in a frightful struggle with a degrading appetite of the soul that was assailing him. And my friend said to me "I tell you, as I watched the man, and saw the divine fire appear and then fade away, then reappear and again fade away, each reappearance of the spirit finding him a little nearer the infinite light of God, as I watched the awful struggle and determination of the spirit of God in this fighting, human soul — I tell you I could have worshipped the man, I could have fallen on my knees and worshipped."

Well, don't you see it *was* God in the Man? If ever there is a God, it is the God who has dedicated His whole eternal life to this struggle

of humanity to become divine. The hour in which your human life takes on divinity, the hour in which once for all eternity you resolve in your inmost soul to live always in the presence of an infinite being of holiness and love, the hour in which your human life becomes triumphantly divine is just the hour in which the divine life becomes triumphantly human.

III

And genuinely to believe in this invisible humanity of God brings into the human life a wonderful sense of perfect communion with God. Do you find the conditions of life hard? They are infinitely harder for God, my friend. Is your spirit clogged by the mass of duties which you wearily face with the dawn of each new day? Ah, think of the world-weariness of God, and be still! Is a man's soul marred by some vice of his inner life? What pollutes man pollutes God. I am looking always for that prophet of the spirit of God who shall burn this world-old truth into the souls of men: God is in very deed bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh, spirit of their spirit; God is in truth closer to our human life than breathing, nearer than hands and feet; all the plague-spots in human life, all the houses of sin, all the hours of solitary unfaithfulness and dishonor, are places and times where the precious spirit of God is being debased and ruined for that which is not holy and righteous. Oh! the spirit

of man must hide itself in shame, must cry out in heart-broken penitence when once it knows the humiliation and suffering its faithlessness has brought into the sensitive spirit of God.

Does the glory of man lie in triumphing over these lowering conditions of life? So is it with God. You need not suppose that the perfection of God is for Him an eternal, unworked-for beauty of soul. He who thinks he sees in God this placid, unmoved and solitary perfection has placed a poor, human soul in the high place of God — a human soul whose face is unmarred by life's imperfections, but only because it has always been protected from the winds that blow and the storms that wreck. But the spirit of God has faced the storms and winds of an eternity and is still triumphing over a whole world of sins and pains and sorrows. Who then sees the perfection of God sees in infinite number and in infinite directions the lines of *Character*, the invisible marks of a divine Humanity, the nobility of whose perfection consists in the simple yet unthinkable sinlessness of the divine being: a divine life all full of our human impulses and passions, yet never once in all eternity yielding the divine ideal to that which is base and mean.

IV

Of this invisible humanity of God there is no visible sign or symbol. Men who ignobly turn from the simple, daily duties and cares of life

and cry "Lord, show us a sign," "Lord, Lord what shall we do to be saved" are not ready for the beatific vision. There is no luxury in this experience of God. In this vision there is the peace that passeth understanding but there is in it no ravishing luxury of spirit. The vision is for him who gladly accepts its blessed challenges. It is for him who finds joy only in the way of righteousness, whose spirit leaps out with a great joy into an eternity of life and duty, for him who knows not what the everlasting years may bring of joy or of sorrow into his eternal spirit but who will not doubt that his is God's way, his life God's life, his endless humanity the ever patient and hopeful divinity of God. It is for the man who can find in the ever human and understanding spirit of God the power to recover from some staggering blow of life, the will to feel the tender, wholesome spirit of divine life struggling and conquering day by day in the life of humanity. The vision is for him who for God's sake sees every living creature transfigured in this light of the ages, who sees God fighting in the very face of human idiocy and sin, who is able to see in the desolate ruins of human institutions and of human lives something of the infinite sorrow of God, something of the marred and defeated spirit of the Father of mankind.

And yet, who save God Himself may cry "Defeated." Is it not just the mystery of this divine life that it breathes forth an invisible and in-

fallible faith in our human lives, that in the very moment when human priests have sadly condemned a child of God to eternal death, the greater, wiser, patienter spirit of God is there endlessly confident, infinitely faithful, pronouncing its everlasting "no;" reviving the fainting spirit; crooning over the sin-sodden human soul; soothing it to sleep, it may be — but to a sleep which shall not end in death; a sleep, rather, from which the human spirit shall awaken refreshed and re-strengthened to re-enter the life of the world and the life of God? Once more, the mystery of God's invisible humanity, the unseen reality of a divine life which is genuinely, understandingly all that our human life from day to day is seeking and hoping to be, a divine life in which weariness, impatience and hopelessness are ever present, seeking to defeat the infinitudes surrounding our human life, and yet a spirit of God which, if weary never rests, if impatient never strikes, if hopeless never dies.

V

THE JOY OF RELIGION

FRANCIS A. CHRISTIE

THE JOY OF RELIGION

Since we hunger for happiness let us heed the promise of joy in religion. Those who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good tell us of a happy thankfulness to God. How many of us have listened to them with a faith perplexed and souls sad or depressed! When we encounter the buoyant joyous life of many of God's saints overflowing with this thankful gladness, we envy them, we deplore our own estate. Is it a lost art for us, a lost joy, this thankfulness? Shall we be like the pagans whom St. Paul describes? They offered many sacrifices, they made much of religious ceremony; but they had no rejoicing adoration in their hearts. As if to sum up their perversity, St. Paul declares, "Neither were they thankful." How shall we win the happiness of the grateful saints?

Let us be natural and sincere about it. If a man says: You ought to be grateful to me, I ask him at once, For what? Show me that he has been kind and I am grateful without imperatives and without constraint. Gratitude comes of itself. If it were a thankfulness offered as a blind duty, it would mean no real feeling in me and would be no joy to my friend. So thankfulness to God should be the heart's spontaneous incense like the fragrance which the violet breathes to the kind heaven.

Once every welcome happening was received as a special providence. A man easily blessed God for each event that gratified desire. For us, in our day, the outer life of the changing world is a system too vast to be interpreted in detail as applications to our single passing needs. But why cease rejoicing in the whole? Why give over thankfulness for the whole simply because the past no longer can claim the meaning that belongs to the whole? Grasp the whole in one complete vision — and surely the heart leaps up. It is a world that lives by a mathematic intelligence. Simply to know its laws expands the intelligence of man and makes him the master of his conditions. It is a world robed in beauty — a world that by its bold splendors and its tender secrecies of form and color or music enchants the senses and refreshes the heart of man. It is a world that flowers in human life and pours its own divine intent into man's precious joys of love and friendship. It is a world of alluring challenges for splendid human adventures of discovery and conquest. It solicits your most daring enterprise. It is inexhaustible to your love of achievement. It environs you with ever fresh demands for deed and thought. It dispenses ever fresh rewards for your ideal cravings. Yes, we are thankful. Life is good and we thank the Giver.

Yet, even so I am unsatisfied. This is a gratitude that rises in cool reflection. It does not

thrill me like the affection that throbs for a present friend in human companionships. Suppose that an absent benefactor bestowed on me a goodly house and fruitful fields for my life's shelter and sustenance. I should be grateful, but his absence would rob my feeling of its full joy. Yet if he came and visited me by word and message or by personal presence, if he should share my life even a little, entering into my daily use of his gifts, if he gave me himself with his gift, then it would all be different. The gift would still be an outer possession, an external thing, but his giving would be an interior thing of my heart-life, through his companionship. The gift and the giving would be a ministration of friendship and all sense of obligation would pass into free spontaneous love.

Is not such a loving thankfulness to God inevitable to us, something sweeter than the gratitude of reflection, something that glows with comforting joy? For God is the great Companion of every life. He is not a mere absent benefactor but an interior friend ministering to us in the hidden ways of our private self-hood. That the early Christian was peculiarly full of joy was because he felt God with him and within him. He had love, joy, peace in the Holy Spirit, in the divine presence within him. The outer scene was the same for his pagan neighbor as for him. Wind and weather, storm and sunshine, dearth of winter and fulness of harvest,

these were the same for both. But the Christian felt that God was the inner companion of his life in the midst of these outer scenes. He felt that a compassionate Father shared his life with a sacred intimacy and from this great friendship he expected blessings more than eye had seen or ear heard, or the craving heart had imagined. Therefore he had joy in his faith. Therefore *he* was wholly thankful. His heart blossomed up in thankfulness to God because of the sunshine of a divine presence in his heart. And this made the Christian a different man from his pagan neighbor. The ancient man of the classic heritage conceived life as a play of great objects without him. He expressed his interests and ideals in shapes and objects of the outer scene. Life itself must stand before his contemplation as a great theory or drama. God must approach him through the scheme of things without, must reveal himself in or through the operations of a world constructed by thought into a great objectified unity or universe. But more and more the Christian valued the inner attitude of the spiritual personality. He found God in the rebuke of conscience, in the peace of his contrition, in the hopes and enthusiasms of his best inward being. In the inner emotions, in the hallowing of his will and the purification of his desires, he felt himself dwelling in the sacred intimate friendship and companionship of the Perfect and Holy Will. Even though he fails to grasp the

great scheme of things entire in some complete and flawless theory, in great pictorial images and forms of thought, the Christian has a sense of the divineness of his experience as he apprehends it inwardly in the heart that seeks to conform itself to the Holy Will, in the spirit that responds to a Perfect Spirit, to a perfection that visits his own bosom. He may fail to express it all in some clear form of reasoning, but he can sing it. He may utter it in the chants and hymns of an art that more truly than logic can express and declare the soul's need of companionship and the soul's joy and loving, the soul's rest in communion. He sings to the Lord a song of thankfulness. Even for human friendships a science might be vainly attempted, yet all the while friendship has a voice and a language and its utterance of itself is lyrical. It is a song of joy for an existence intensified and transfigured not through any change in the outer world, but by the world's new illumination from the heart's own happiness.

> "O friend, my bosom said,
> Through thee alone, the sky is arched,
> Through thee the rose is red,
> All things through thee take nobler form
> And look beyond the earth.
> The mill-round of our fate appears
> A sunpath in thy worth."

There are degrees of faith, degrees of appre-

ciation, of insight and realization. It is a high and blessed attainment to see no mill-round of fate but only a sunpath of hope, because of the great worth of God, because of the secret adoration of the Perfect Spirit that has been quickened and animated in the inner life, transfusing the heart with serene expectancies and making it musical with thankfulness since He shares our life in this mansion of His own giving.

It is good to sing praises unto our God. Yes —there are happy saints who rejoice in the Lord alway. But we, you say, are not always such. For us the earth is not always fair nor the sky stainless. For us there are days of silent and secret misery. Old wounds bleed afresh. We feel the tug of ball and chain in our wretched captivity. There is the great cloud of human pain and evil. There is a gloomy problem that my mind and my understanding cannot dispel. Give me some science or system that will explain and by explanation banish from the mansion of God's giving the specter, nay the clutching reality of evil! I will not say that there is such a science. I will not say that you shall walk by sight and not by faith. I will not say that you will banish the fact of evil. But you may vanquish its power and wrest from it a finer good. The evil that carried you away captive requires a song and you will sing the Lord's song with a voice of undying devotion more sweet, more beautiful, more thrilling because it is the

thankfulness learned in the strange land of pain. The reasoning mind may find no full answer for its logical questions, but the heart may find reasons that reason knows not of. The wrestling will may find God in the sore experience of evil before the understanding wins the daylight of explanation. A strange visitant of the night wrestled with Jacob and wounded him and cried, "Let me go for the day breaketh." And Jacob answered, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." It is a parable for all the ages. The wounding and the blessing, both are real. Calamity crushes. Suffering wastes us. Moral ordeals torture us. Death robs us and leaves us gashed and naked and prone. It is the religious man who feels all this with the keenest pain. The man of the world is often hard and unsympathetic. Robbed of a pleasure he turns to other pleasures that make him forget the loss. The religious man suffers the more keenly with a suffering that penetrates to his inner life. He quivers with a spiritual misery not for his own hurt merely but for the blight on other lives. It was Jesus who sweat drops of blood. But he who suffers so keenly is just the one who most surely knows the goodness of God. That knowledge is not perfect until it is made perfect through suffering. Jesus is the great instance again. The Father was with him when he was abandoned and alone. The disciple can learn the same befriending and companionship of God in his sorest distress. Is he tempted?

Has he a weakness of nature, a wrong disposition? It is an evil, but the wrestling with that evil may discover the presence of the Perfect Will making his struggle a source of good. So long as he wrestles, he is disciplined and fortified. All the unused and unformed material of goodness in him is shaped and strengthened by the struggle. All the resources of many different capacities of good seem to come trooping to the aid of the weaker member of his life. A great Ally is marshalling his forces for him and handling the battle for him and showing him through the very shock of war the supreme meaning and glory of moral conquest. God is for me — cries the man in combat for his soul.

Or is it some bewildering loss for which there is no comfort of comprehension, no consolation of remaining joy. Your heart has never ceased to ache. But the heartache can become the most sacred thing in your life. The whole divine bidding to be perfect as God is perfect can centre round the heartache and speak to you there and get meaning and power there. The heartache is a kind of holy shrine in man. It is the place where he learns pity and kindness and patience and gentleness. It is the holy place that makes him aspiring and prayerful. It is there that he asks to be known and comprehended. It is there that he whispers Thou to an enfolding knowledge and presence. It is there he learns that he is not alone but the Father is with him. It is there he

learns to say with a quiver of comprehension: Even the night can be light about me. It is a good thing to sing praises for the sweet hope of spring and the redolent joy of summer, but only he who in the dark and wintry facts of life has felt the support of the everlasting arms of the heavenly friendship, only he can find all of life a unity of divine goodness. He who in misery and darkness and shame found himself not alone, he more than all men sees his thought the partial image of a thought complete, his striving the execution of a purpose all beneficent, his joy the overflowing of an infinite energy of good whose child and likeness he is, in whom he lives and moves and has his being.

It is a happy thing to thank our human brother for his kindness and affection. It is a joy to know and acknowledge his love. It is the soul's good, the soul's joy, to praise God for His befriending. You and I ask for riches and ease and then we discover the inner misery of many who possess them. We ask for place and prestige and power and we find the holders of them pronouncing their privileges dust and ashes. We want joy and only one thing can bring joy to any lot. Only love can bestow joy. A great secret struggles to utter itself in all religions. It throbs and pulses in the religion of Jesus. It makes men stammer strange, fantastic prophecies and bewildering hopes. It shapes theories of expiations and creates sacraments of com-

munion. It frames systems of doctrine and explanations for itself. The form of prophecy may fail to satisfy. The sacrament may become inadequate. The doctrine may be outworn. The secret and the song remain, the great undefeated and undying joy renews the praise of God. The great wonder wakens anew; what is man that Thou visitest him! The great companionship is ours. The holy and perfect beneficence of God is a presence, an intimate interior wonder, rebuking, chastening, hallowing, refining, ennobling, exalting, gladdening; bringing us from our low beginnings to the stature of the Son of God, investing our sluggish hearts until they shall start with clear and certain recognition and cry Abba, Father!

There is joy, for there is love, and those who know that love sing praise to God.

VI
THE PROPHET'S FUNCTION

HENRY PRESERVED SMITH

THE PROPHET'S FUNCTION

What is the use of religion? To this question there may be many answers. Religion is closely united with so many human interests that it may be considered in different aspects, and we can hardly expect to define it in a single sentence or estimate its value by one method of approach. For the present we will consider the conception of one of the most gifted of preachers who apprehended his mission clearly and expressed his apprehension in these words: "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he may be glorified." (Is. lxi, 1-3).

The circumstances in which these words were written are much more clear to us than they were to the men who regarded them as the words of Isaiah the son of Amoz. In fact Isaiah's conception of his mission was very different. He

was sent to rebuke and threaten, whereas our prophet is sent to comfort and encourage. Our prophet spoke so evidently to the depressed and suffering exiles of Judah that we wonder how any one could shut his eyes to the fact. His conception of his mission must be interpreted by this fact. What he is trying to tell us is the value of religion in a time of sorrow. To this subject we may give a little attention.

The keenest pang suffered by the Israelites in exile came from their disappointment at God Himself. In the traditions which had come down from the fathers they had learned how God had chosen Jerusalem for His own dwelling, how He had directed Solomon to build Him a temple there, how that temple had been preserved from the enemy at more than one trying crisis. Even a Sennacherib with the whole Assyrian empire at his back had not been able to capture it. But the confidence based on these traditions had proved vain. Nebuchadrezzar had done more than Sennacherib could do. He had taken Jerusalem and laid it waste, and had burned the beautiful house with fire. How severe was the blow to faith struck by this episode! It was as if God had abandoned His own. In fact, not a few of the Jews said openly that their God had gone away, and that they must therefore worship some other divinity. But some there were who remained faithful, yet with a tormenting sense of perplexity. Could they worship their God in a

foreign land? Could He who had not protected His own temple — could He see and hear them in the far-off Babylon? These were the questions that must be answered. It was their prophet's privilege to answer them; and his answer was to these perplexed ones a veritable revelation.

He answered by giving them a better knowledge of God and His ways. The trouble with them had been partly their limited conception of God. They (perhaps even the most pious among them) had thought of God as Israel's God, one among many. He was, perhaps, more powerful than the gods of the nations; He was certainly better in His dealing with His people. But He was after all only one among many divinities. So long as they stood on this ground it was inevitable that they should despair when their city and temple were given over to the flames. The only way they could recover their faith was by rising to a larger conception. This was pointed out by our prophet. To him Israel's Jehovah is the God of the whole earth. His plan is not confined to Israel — it embraces the nations also. The surrender of Jerusalem was a part of His design to show His control of the great movements of mankind. The only reason the Israelite had been stunned by the blow was that he had not comprehended the larger design. "My thoughts are not your thoughts" was the message, but this was because His ways were higher than theirs and His thoughts larger than theirs.

Looking back on the course of history we see that the prophet was right. The time had fully come for the local and tribal conception of God to be shattered that it might be replaced by a larger one. It could be shattered only by some catastrophe such as the fall of Jerusalem. Without the catastrophe the religion of Israel would never have taken the step in advance which prepared the way for the New Testament and for Christianity. The suffering which was necessary for those on whom the blow fell was no doubt acute. But we can endure suffering if we know that good will come out of it in the long run. The whole inspiration of the martyrs has come from this conviction. The preacher's function is to assure the tried and tempted ones that their sufferings are not in vain.

There is something more here than the cold comfort got from the law of nature which sacrifices the individual for the good of the race. The process, which is careful of the type but which seems so careless of the individual, is undoubtedly a part of the divine plan. But for His sentient and rational children the Heavenly Father has more. He makes them perfect through suffering. The virtues and graces of the truly religious life could not come to birth except through pain and privation. The larger plan does not preclude consideration for the individual. The captivity of Israel was a means for lifting the race to a higher conception of religion. But

Israel itself was raised to a higher plane by its experience.

The pangs suffered by the captive Israelites are not fully accounted for by their ignorance of the divine plan. A second element was the keen sense of sin developed by their misfortunes. In the earlier days they had often been reminded by their prophets that the covenant between them and their God implied obligations on their part. With what must have seemed monotonous insistence these preachers had warned them that if they persisted in their evil ways God would cast them off. So long as the punishment was delayed, the message fell on deaf ears. But with the fall of Jerusalem a great revulsion of feeling came over the people. Instead of the over-confidence which had possessed them, they fell into despair. They said as we read in Ezekiel: "Our bones are dried up and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off." To meet this state of mind the whole tone of the prophetic preaching changed. Where stern rebuke had been, we find the tenderest consolation. The assurance of forgiveness becomes as prominent as had been the threat of punishment. It is for this reason that our prophet dwells so on the forgiving love of God: "I have blotted out as a cloud thy transgressions and as a thick mist thy sins." So far from the patience of God having been exhausted and His love turned to hate, it was precisely now that His patience was becoming most manifest and

His love most ready to help. Nay, the very sense of sin which might deepen to despair was the pledge of His presence: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite." With such assurances the prophet gave his depressed countrymen a garland for ashes, and a garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

But we have not yet exhausted the misery of the exiles' situation. What galled them most was the sense that they were no longer free. In their own land they had at least been their own masters — in Babylon they were under the will of others. In material resources Babylonia compared favorably with Israel. It is not certain that the exiles were worse off in the comforts of life than they had been in their own land. But to the noble mind the luxury of a king's palace has no charms if it implies subjection to the will of another. Better the lot of a peasant in one's own land than that of a pampered menial in a foreign country.

We understand in view of this state of things why our author emphasizes as part of his mission the proclaiming of liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. We need not take his words too literally; very few if any of the exiles were in prison or in fetters. What he meant to address was the state of mind

of those who felt that they were no longer their own masters. To these he brings the assurance of freedom. In part, no doubt, he gave the assurance of a literal deliverance from exile and a return to their own land. But in part he had in mind the profound truth that the Lord's freeman is no longer slave to any one, no matter what his outward condition might be.

> "Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage."

It is noticeable that throughout this book the prophet uses the term "servant" of Israel, as though to say: God's servant and therefore not in servitude to any human master. It is God who speaks and says: Though to appearance you are in bondage to the Babylonians, what matters it? In fact, you are My servants accomplishing My work, and destined to a glorious emancipation.

But the ultimate question is still to be answered. Granted all that has been said about true service and true freedom, can we go farther and discover what end God Himself has in bringing these despised exiles into His service? The prophet, at any rate, is not in doubt, for he adds as the supreme reason: That they may be called trees of righteousness. What he means is that the supreme values in the sight of God are moral values. To this end He is disciplining His servants that He may develop in them the virtues

which alone ennoble men and make them more than the beasts. To this end He gave Israel to the conqueror, that they might gain just this higher knowledge of Him, might taste the sweets of forgiveness and find the blessedness of His service — that service which is perfect freedom.

We have now defined to ourselves the conception of religion as it was held by a man of spiritual insight twenty-five hundred years ago. It remains to ask whether his conception has vitality enough to survive through these centuries. It would, of course, be insincere on our part to claim that our life is only a Babylonish captivity, that we are miserable wretches banished from our home. The most of us do not feel this to be the case, and we find it difficult to enter into the mind of many sincere Christians who in past times bewailed the miserable lot in which they found themselves. There is much good in life and we receive it joyfully as our Father's gift. Cheerfully we take the work given us to do and find satisfaction in it. To this extent we may claim that the religion of the prophet has nothing to teach us.

But, on the other hand, all of us have times when we feel the need of the message spoken to the exiles of so long ago. And our need comes from the same sort of experiences which the exiles had. We are in perplexity because our traditional view of God is inadequate; we are discour-

aged because we find ourselves under the condemnation of our own consciences; we are hampered by circumstances which we cannot control and which threaten to control us. We need the minister of religion to do for us what the prophet of old did for the exiled Israelites.

First of all we need him to purify and elevate our idea of God. Our religious conceptions are formed under the influence of a tradition. But tradition notoriously holds on to ideas and customs which have been outgrown. If our religious conceptions are to be a living part of ourselves they must grow with us. Our religious teacher must come to our help here. He must show us the largeness of the divine plan, correct unworthy ideas of God, and bring our religious thinking to a higher level. Then he must deal with the sense of sin. This sense is undoubtedly much less acute than it once was. We have difficulty in realizing the frame of mind with which our forefathers confessed that they were miserable offenders. We might think that the preacher ought to stimulate this sense, sensitise the conscience. This is, in fact, a part of his work. But we are dealing now with the depressing and enervating sense of sin which is still experienced by some souls. There is such a state of mind and it cuts the nerve of effort. To those who suffer from this morbid conscience the minister of religion has a message. He has the right

to give assurance of forgiveness, to point to the love of God, to call to a renewed effort in the direction of right living.

Perhaps more than all else we need the help of religion in view of the limitations of life. One of the most pathetic things in human life is the sight of a bold aspiring spirit constantly baffled and thwarted by circumstances. All of us have listened with amusement and at the same time with something like pity to a bright boy planning for his future. He is going to make a great fortune and own houses and ships and all that heart can wish. Or he is going to be a great statesman and occupy the White House. Or, perhaps, he will be a soldier and wade through seas of blood, making some good cause triumph, and handing down to posterity a name that shall never die. When he is a man he will be free and do all things that heart can suggest. You know how he will be undeceived. His best efforts will give him small riches and smaller fame. Even if he sets his heart on spiritual values he falls far short of his ideal. The slave of circumstances he calls himself — buffeted and beaten by an adverse fortune. With an ancient preacher of pessimism he declares: All is emptiness and a striving after wind.

And again religion comes to our help. It shows that only the slavish mind is a slave; that the limitations of life are not bonds and fetters. They are the discipline of a wise and loving

Father Who knows best how to train His children in nobility and self-sacrifice. For, after all, these are the great things. Ethical values are the true values. No man is a slave who is master of himself. No life is a failure which exemplifies fidelity, and self-control, and kindliness. This is the message of the preacher, eternally true and eternally in need of enforcement.

VII

JESUS' DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

FRANCIS A. CHRISTIE

JESUS' DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

Many brief words of Jesus have an inexhaustible fulness. In a simple phrase he could compress the meaning of all duty, all hope, all faith, all destiny. "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect:" all the beliefs and aspirations of a complete system of spiritual religion may be found condensed and implicated in that appeal. Love God with your whole being and your neighbor as yourself: from this, too, perspectives of meaning radiate to embrace infinity. So again all the Christian thought may be found in his primal and constant demand: Seek ye first the Kingdom of God. The words enfold the fulness of man's spiritual possibilities, the totality of God's beneficence. They are a definition of duty and yet also a statement of the way of salvation. They mean that salvation comes through finding and pursuing the supreme purpose appointed by God. Perhaps we hesitate to think that this is so. To be saved through fidelity to purpose would seem to mean that man saves himself by will and effort, while all the great saints have known and taught that salvation is the gift of God. But in reality there is no dissonance between the mandate to moral toil and the rich promise of the grace of God. It is, indeed, a problem to distinguish what is human and what divine and to find a formula for uniting them, but what is para-

dox for our thinking is not always conflict in experience. My life is mine, my self is mine; but my life and my self are intimately, mysteriously related to a divine life which is the fountain of all being. What we do and attain is a mingling of our effort with the forces of the divine life in which we have our being. We are ever dependent. Give us this day our daily bread, we cry. Give us help, light, joy, peace. We depend upon the grace of God. But we are active dependents. If we do not seek, we find not. We must ask and make effort to obtain. God's bounty diffused in the great system of the world brings us our daily bread, but we must earn it. Light and beauty and joy are to be had from God, but they come not to any sluggish and passive man. They come to the active and pursuant spirit. The apostle who speaks of salvation as the gift of God enjoins us to work out our salvation. Human endeavor and God's free giving meet in the good we win. We need to know far more than man yet knows of the mystery of personal life, before we can divide for thought the elements that make one thing in experience.

> "Draw if thou canst the mystic line
> Severing rightly his from thine,
> Which is human, which divine."

Let us not hesitate to dwell as we need on the human side of our supreme expectation and to

understand the human conditions of its attainment.

Nothing is good save in relation to a purpose. A thing is good only as it is good for something, good to serve a valued purpose. When a thing fits no purpose it is for us neither good nor bad; it is indifferent. Of a man we demand that he shall serve some end. Of a man the worst that can be said is that he is good for nothing. That means that manhood is gone from him, that he is a mere useless thing. Manhood implies will, and will involves an aim and goal. You are virtuous if you faithfully pursue a right purpose. You are a sinner if you let your good purpose go and drift with any random impulse. Sin is disloyalty to the good you meant to be. He is saved from sin who is engrossed by an all-controlling purpose which is seen to be God's full intention for him. He is saved whose life is whole and unimpaired in the enactment of good, and wholeness means organization, a bringing of all the thoughts and impulses and feelings into order and harmony. The thoughts and impulses and feelings all have their proper right. In the state which we call salvation they have found their due place, since they are serving our true purpose, a purpose which is true because it is God's intention. An ordered, harmonious, organized life, organized by the principle that God sets as the supreme aim for us, this surely is the supreme life, the

blessed life, the saved life. It is the aimless life that is lost. Imagine, if you have not known, a succession of listless and empty days without an end in view, hours of mere random and capricious and fleeting impulses without steady intentions, without unity of meaning. When the eye is not single the whole body is full of forlorn darkness. Gone are the bright beckoning hopes, gone the alluring prospects, gone the satisfied memory, the zest of achievement, the joy of effort, the blessedness of sacrifice, the triumph of work. When the mind cannot hold to a purpose, the result is a disorganized, disintegrated and wretchedly unhappy existence. Not only does such a life pall and grow irksome for very lack of meaning, but it makes the man unserviceable to others. We are useful to others only when we show constancy and efficiency, only when others from a knowledge of our aims and our faithfulness can depend upon us and forecast our action. And how perilous the aimless life! Impulses and feelings are unrelated and unharmonized. They live, each for itself, in a kind of anarchy. Each is a tyrant for the moment. The man is not free. He is dominated by the passing mood. He is the slave of impulse.

Every student knows the value of an aim for the life of the mind. One may have a certain vivacity of mind that is fruitless and insufficient because it is not concentrated by a steady pursuit. There may be a sensitive intelligence and

a brilliant capacity for penetrating intuitions, and yet for lack of the co-ordination that a definite purpose brings, the random play of mind comes to nothing. A far inferior talent may end in more productive accomplishment and happier satisfaction because it is steadily devoted to a single field of study, working systematically to bring all the facts into proper array, to discover those facts that will fill out the empty gaps, and to possess the whole as an organized and constructed knowledge with consistency of meaning from end to end. That is what we call scientific knowledge, a knowledge of things in their total relations, and it is the only satisfactory and permanently useful knowledge. It is purpose that wins this unity and organization and effectiveness. Perhaps at school we found ourselves listless and distrustful of our powers. What we had studied seemed gone from us. It was not at our command. But suddenly we are given a theme, set to work out a theory, to solve a problem, to explain an idea. Then we begin to be alive instead of listless. All our mental resources begin to bear upon that definite point. Our memory begins to yield buried stores of knowledge, our power of invention is stimulated, imagination plays actively about the subject. We are often surprised at the unsuspected wealth and worth of what the purpose elicits from us. We are roused and animated and sustained by happy interest. In the listless and aimless hour we felt

a growing weariness; now we make prolonged effort without fatigue. The mind glows with health and conscious vigor. The definite purpose was the condition of this healthful and happy and efficient activity.

Every household knows this truth. You set for yourself the purpose of building a family home. Then the day's work ceases to be drudgery, for it has a goal. You no longer have to struggle against fickle desires of idle amusement or useless expenditure. You control whims and set a law to appetites, for you have a precious purpose to accomplish. You propose to educate your child; then how light is the burden of sacrifice and self-denial, for your heart is set upon a good that requires them. Self-denials cease to be evils since they are steps to good. Any good purpose gives you control over your life. It moralizes you. It saves you from the tyranny of impulse. It regulates habit. It confines every natural inclination to its temperate and proper place.

What, then, if you should find the supreme purpose, that which has absolute and complete worth for you, that which claims sovereignty over all your powers, the purpose whose fulfilment would be your highest satisfaction, the one which would bestow a completely true and proper proportion on all your inclinations, the one that evokes all your energies into freest play, cementing you into closest unison with all your fellows, crowning your own personal existence with the

highest significance and serving as the goal of all the social organization of mankind. If God should reveal that supreme purpose to you, and if it should engage and dominate your soul, you would be saved indeed. Even though it should not possess and control you at every moment, though it mould not every action and fail to regulate every affection, though you achieve no perfect and unrelaxing obedience to its demands; still, even in your imperfection and failure, the knowledge of this great aim and purpose of your life would be an immeasurable gain. It would give insight and wisdom. It would show what place and proportion your various needs and wishes must assume if they are to serve the end which gives them their true law. Every interest would be seen from the height of the supreme standard. Having the highest measure of all duties you would understand your duty in perplexing situations. You would be emancipated from the frivolous and petty standards of a world absorbed in things seen, immediate and transient. You would comprehend ideals. Your tasks would be illuminated by the vision of the mount. Your soul would have the widest horizons. In your secluded and narrow vale of life, you would be mindful of the vast, perfect, beautiful entirety which outspreads it and is its sovereign realm. You would see your life as God intends it.

Christ declares to us this supreme purpose.

The religion of Jesus was devotion to this supreme standard and intention. The religion of Jesus demands that here and now, in every moment, in every thought and feeling and choice, we shall live according to the demands of that purpose which utters the divine intention for life. Jesus does not cancel any natural need or striving. He knew that man needs bread and raiment and rest and relaxation. He affirms that God's bounty provides all these things, not as ends in themselves, but as subsidiary and contributive good. Seek the supreme purpose and all these things shall be added unto you. Seek first the Kingdom of God. That kingdom awaits you — make new your life for that. Be ready for it now. Watch and be ready for the hour when it shall dawn. Set your heart upon it. Count it your treasure of gold, your jewel of priceless worth. Live by that kingdom's law. Be ready for its perfections now. And the appealing and unforgetable thing in the record of Jesus is that he accepted and interpreted all the tragedies of his lot as contained in the wisdom and beneficence of the Father's great purpose for the lives of His children. Jesus lived and Jesus taught a heroic, daring idealism of trust in this supreme intention of the divine goodness.

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God! The seeking lifts us very near to God. Such yearning sees and seeks a life wherein all spirits together enact the justice and benevolence which is the

character of God. It discerns a vision of a family of men who mirror in their disposition and action the perfection and the beauty of the divine good will. It seeks a life where all animosities are hushed in tender loyalty, where all the strife between "mine" and "thine" dies in the happy strain of "ours," where all the cruelty and selfishness have passed away and the long-prayed-for peace of God enfolds the world with its serenity and rest; where the sweet affection of the home has expanded into a wide and ardent love of each and all, filling life with new and intenser joy such as we scarce dream of in this troubled state. That is a life where the precious boons of knowledge or any noble good are shared by all, where doubtless the stumbling-blocks and hindrances and blighting failures that now cumber the path shall be banished by the full knowledge and the bounteous skill and unstinted affection of the perfect state. It will be a world made new by a complete pervasion of the divine life, and the hearts that now are mournful shall sing their thankfulness to Him who is the fountain of such love and joy.

Christian, your citizenship is in that heaven. Your heart burns within you when you hear of it. The vision of it compels and necessitates you. It is your soul's desire and your soul's law. All your duties are faint foreshadowings of that sublime duty. All your cravings are the partial longings of that one perfect desire. When you

behold it, your spirit throbs in responsive self-surrender to its claims. There is your great sovereign purpose, the purpose that gives meaning to all these fragments of life, the purpose that evokes your highest powers and feeds you with enduring strength and inspires you to patient heroism and unlamenting self-denials, the purpose that gives wholeness, vigor, consistency, health to all striving and reveals the due measure and degree of the present occupations, the purpose that generates a holy and heavenly spirit in you and enables you to be a fountain of faith to the weary and despairing, of comfort to those that sit in loneliness, of hope to those that are blighted and ashamed.

Where will this great fulfilment be and when? Will it be on the earth or only in higher mansions of God? Is this the destiny only of some far-off generation in the future of earthly history, or shall I, too, inherit this desire of the soul when my days are told and I pass hence from the present work and the voices sweet to hear and the lingering handclasps of human love? When these questions are asked, the soul that asks them gives answer with passionate faith. We trust the instinct and prophecy of our deepest nature even though an exact knowledge of all the where and when and how is denied us. That perfect world is the goal for all the earthly history that shall be. The deep inevitable law of our being is to live for the social weal and only that vision

of love and sonship which Jesus names the realm of God has the right to be a social order. That perfect world is goal and destiny for you and me and every one, though the perfect welfare of earthly history be postponed to incalculable distance, for only that perfect order has sovereignty of right over me now or ever. In its binding sovereignty we read our prophecies. Wherever it may lie, that goal is authoritative and challenging to every moment of personal existence. Wherever its perfect realization may be, whether on earth or in modes of existence veiled from view, it is the law of life now, we are related to it now, it is the soul's yearning now and every partial realization of its life in the fleeting moments of our purest good is the joy above all other present joy. The many questions left without clear and definite answer, escaping our power to picture and imagine the reality which our faith asserts, these incessant and unsatisfied questions mean only that the one life we know is not described and expressed and bounded by conceptions that lie on the plane of knowledge. What we know with the exactness of science is a knowledge of the forces in nature's determinism that we must use for the practical control of that mechanism of nature. Yet even here, as we are well aware, we deal with an abstracted part and not the whole of reality. We abstract this play of interrelated forces in order to use it for our practical needs, but we leave aside from our sci-

ence a wealth of perception and human response to it that cannot be reduced to knowledge exact and clear. This scene before us from which our science selects what it needs is not bare energy and naked mechanism. It is force robed in beauty. Its magnitudes and quantities are given to us in a spectacle of undulating hills and misty valleys, of clouds that gather and vanish like beautiful dreams over the repose of forest and meadow, of seas that mirror and absorb the blue of heaven. The power which our science measures and weighs is clothed with qualities that mock measurement, qualities that make it more than mere power and waken in us, as mere power could never do, a delight that may rise to adoration and to love, as if soul and spirit there were speaking to our soul and spirit. Even on the level plane of knowledge we are responsive to a whole which outruns knowledge, a whole which no poet could ever quite utter, no painter could fully render. So, too, we are related to a realm and an infinitude which rises far above this level plane of our perception, and never yields itself in the clear and measurable forms of knowledge. Yet all the while it draws us and wields us and sways us with the power of right and duty and worth. We express it and voice it in the terms of what we have known and perceived, yet we are ever ready to acknowledge that our apprehension is scant and our expression inadequate. If we make it an external picture, an external theory, we have

an incurable discontent with the form and image. That is finite and partial while we are seeking a life eternal and infinite and complete for the yearnings of the deepest self. There is ever a beyond not fully conceivable, a fulness not all attainable, yet ever real to the best and deepest in our own being. We are ever reforming the utterance of that Beyond that beckons to our hopes and efforts. The very idea of it has had its history. It has grown, been expanded, been spiritualized. It is no more for us the simple expectancy of fat flocks and fruitful fields, and wealth from tributary foes. It means now the highest fulfilment of a spiritual personality that has put all material things under its feet. It is the Kingdom of God, a life in the image of the unexhausted divine life. God unveils Himself in this sole supreme and sovereign purpose of all personal life. God reveals His sovereignty in its authority and allurement. God communes with man through the commerce which this appealing destiny has with man's own need and longing and self-surrender. Here is that real presence of God which all religions struggle to conceive and express. Jesus holds up before us that real presence, as in the solemn ritual the priest elevates the sacred host, as the very body of God. Jesus holds up before us that real presence in a commanding behest. It is no mere word of spoken precept. It is the felt pressure upon our personal being of the divine life in which our being shall find its

perfection. It moulds our desires and intentions, it transfigures earthly life to the likeness of that heavenly realm where the will of God is done in swift, unhindered spontaneity of love. The Christian's chief prayer is, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as in heaven.

VIII
THE TRUE ATONEMENT

WILLIAM H. FISH

THE TRUE ATONEMENT

"From Japan to Peru," says Gibbon, "the use of sacrifice has universally prevailed"; and we find the assertion supported by a mass of evidence drawn from the religious observances of races and nations in the most diverse stages of culture, and separated by the widest intervals of space and time. For example, the ancient Greeks, as we know, celebrated great occasions by sacrificing a hundred oxen — a hecatomb, as they called it. The Mandan Indians were accustomed to burn the first kettleful of green corn as an offering to the Great Spirit before the feast began, and the Zulus, of South Africa, burn incense in connection with a portion of a slaughtered beast. The Jewish ritual provides with great elaborateness of detail, as every reader of the Old Testament is aware, for sacrifices of various kinds, and the first book of Kings tells us that on one occasion Solomon offered unto the Lord two and twenty thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep; nor are the prevalent forms of Christianity destitute of the sacrificial element. In Bulgaria, as we are told, lambs, kids, honey and wine are solemnly offered on the feast of the Virgin Mary, in order to secure good health to the children of the house. In every Roman Catholic church in the world the offering of incense regularly accompanies the

great sacrifice of the mass; and to conclude and crown a list which might be indefinitely extended, according to the common doctrine of the Atonement, the death of Christ is regarded as a propitiatory sacrifice made on account of the sins of the world.

It is easy to see how crude and grotesque were many of the ideas out of which such practices and beliefs originally sprang. When we learn that the Peruvians, like many other ancient people, believed that the sun literally drank up and enjoyed as a man would enjoy, the libations which were poured out before him and were seen to diminish from day to day, when we find that the Greeks regarded animal sacrifices as the food of the gods in such a gross and material sense that one deity was called the goat-eater, and another the bull-eater, we are tempted to turn away from the entire circle of early thought concerning sacrifice with the feeling that it evinces nothing but the most amazing ignorance and superstition.

But it would be a grave mistake to rest satisfied with such a view. It is generally safe to assume that there must be an element of truth at the basis of every widespread religious belief. Professor Robertson Smith presents a great mass of evidence in support of the theory, that the fundamental idea of ancient sacrifice is divine communion — the establishment or confirmation of a living bond between the worshippers and their

god. In some parts of the world even at the present day if two men partake of the smallest morsel of food together they are held to be united, for the time being at least, by a tie which it would be a shame and disgrace for either to break. In ancient times it was perfectly easy and natural to extend this idea into the religious domain, and to believe that by eating of the same holy flesh of which a part was laid upon the altar as "food of the deity," a new and closer relation with the Divine Being could be formed; and as the blood of an animal was thought to be the seat of life, a specially sacred significance came to be attached to drinking the blood of the sacrifice or sprinkling a portion of it upon the worshipper and a portion upon the altar or the ground. In this way, it was believed, God and man were made partakers of the same life.

Gross and material as all this is, we can easily see in it the germs of a higher faith, for the desire for a more perfect communion with God and a fuller participation in the divine life is the mainspring of all the best progress, past, present, and still to come. So that in this case, as in so many others, when we examine primitive rites with sufficient care to discover their deeper meaning, we find occasion for something besides contempt and repulsion in our thought of them.

Our respect becomes greater when we consider the more advanced stages in the development of the idea of sacrifice. The sin-offerings of the

Jews, for example, bear witness to an awakened moral sense. They imply a vivid consciousness of the separation from God which sin causes, and the need of a restoration of the broken union. Through them, the soul, blindly groping after some means of satisfying the inexorable divine justice and escaping from the torments of an awakened conscience, found a partial and temporary relief; for it was believed that though retribution was certain, it did not necessarily fall upon the offender himself. God could not be mocked, but His wrath might be diverted if an innocent victim could be found to bear vicariously the penalty which must be inflicted. If the law demanded the shedding of blood, it had to be obeyed, but under certain conditions it was thought to make no difference whether the blood poured out was that of a guilty man or a substituted sheep. On the great day of Atonement, when an offering was made for the entire nation, the scapegoat, on which the highpriest's hand was laid, took away it was thought, the people's sins. To those under the influence of this belief the subsequent transition, in connection with Jesus, to a Lamb of God, taking away the sins of the world in the same sense was a very natural one.

Here again we see a strange intermingling of truth and error, as it seems to us, but an intermingling which was quite inevitable at that early time. The moral intuition was there, but it was

as yet only partially developed. Men had begun to feel the need of some sort of moral expiation and atonement, but they were not yet able to see clearly what sort would alone satisfy the requirement of the divine law. We may perhaps enter into their state of mind by recalling certain experiences of our own. Who does not know the feeling of intense dissatisfaction which sometimes follows an unprofitably spent — a wasted or worse than wasted — day? Who has not felt at such times an impulse to throw all his energies into a single tremendous effort to make amends in a moment for long hours of idleness and self-indulgence — to do anything, to catch at any straw that offers the slightest chance of escape from the oppressive sense of mortification and self-abasement? We find, as often as we pass through this experience, that no such sudden and complete escape is possible, that there is no merely outward and temporary act that can fully satisfy the demand of conscience and the religious instinct, that our atonement in order to be effectual must be what the name implies — a genuine at-one-ment — a restoration, through contrition sufficiently sincere and lasting to bring forth satisfactory fruits, of the broken harmony between our will and the will of the just and righteous God.

Now this is precisely what the Hebrews found in their experience. At first in their newly awakened sense of moral separation from God,

they naturally turned to the ancient rites of their religion in search of help. Something must be done to appease their offended Deity; why might not the sacrifice through which their fathers had believed it possible to enter into physical communion with him be used as a means of reëstablishing the lost moral communion also? Not that this question necessarily or even probably took quite so definite and distinct a shape in their minds, but it may easily have been one, at least, of the underlying motives which led them to continue to offer the sacrifices of their ancestral worship, only trying to give them a new and higher meaning. Very soon, however, the discovery was made that the desired end was not to be gained in that way. Though rivers of blood flowed in the courts of the temple, the burden of sin was not removed from the individual conscience, nor did the scapegoat, driven off into the wilderness, leave behind a purified nation; and we find in various books of the Old Testament indications that there were some, even at a very early date, who saw this as clearly as we can see it now, and who pointed out even then the only true method of salvation. In the first book of Samuel we read, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Isaiah declares that "the Lord delighteth not in the blood of bullocks or lambs or goats," and that if his people will "cease to do evil and learn to do well, though their sins be

as scarlet they shall be white as snow." Micah gives to the question, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" the answer, "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?" The Psalmist writes, "Sacrifice and meat-offering, burnt-offering and sin-offering thou hast not required," and again, "The sacrifices of God are a broken"— or as otherwise translated, a troubled —"spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Here we have the moral intuition not partially, but fully developed — recognizing clearly the utter futility of all merely outward means of securing divine favor, and declaring repentance and obedience to be the essential, and the sole essential requirement. And although these were doubtless at first exceptional utterances, although the sacrificial altar was maintained as long as the temple itself endured, it is impossible to believe that the higher and more spiritual view, so distinctly and forcibly proclaimed, can have been altogether without effect. Beyond a doubt the better part of the people, the more earnest and sincerely aspiring among them, came to look upon the slaughter of doves and lambs more and more in the light of a symbolical representation of that inner offering without which all else is of no avail. It is only in this sense, surely — a sense which must have been sufficiently well understood to require no elaborate explanations — that Jesus

can have been willing to give even a silent countenance to the common rites of the temple-worship or to partake of the paschal lamb. It is in this sense also, as I believe, that we must interpret many passages of the New Testament on which the sacrificial element in Christianity is largely based — passages referring to Jesus as the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and the like. For Christianity, it must be remembered, is an Oriental religion, and to understand its early records it is necessary to enter into the Oriental mind.

Travelers tell us that in visiting to-day the abode of an Arab sheik, if he wishes to receive you politely, he tells you that his house, his family, his person and all he has are yours; and yet if you take him at his word, and attempt to appropriate even the least of his possessions at your departure, he will treat you as a thief. You may say perhaps, "But you gave me everything in the house" he will answer, "You come from a country where people have no politeness; I gave these things; that means welcome, and nothing more."

This difference between the East and West has often been pointed out, but many still apparently forget that the Bible is an Oriental book and that Jesus and the apostles spoke — and in order to be understood were obliged to speak — the ordinary language of their time and country. As a direct result of this forgetfulness, doctrines are

often derived from the literal sense of Scripture which have no warrant in its meaning — the meaning that would have been conveyed to those to whom the spoken or written words were originally addressed. To refer to a single conspicuous instance, on the declaration of Jesus at the Last Supper, "This is my body," the Roman Catholic church has founded the doctrine of the "Real Presence"— the actual transformation of the bread of the Eucharist into the body of Christ; though it could not possibly have occurred to those who partook of the supper that they were literally eating his body while he was all the time in full view and was partaking with them.

In the same way the origin of many of the prevalent Protestant ideas in regard to the atonement, of which the early Jewish sacrifices have been taken as types, can be traced to similar misinterpretations of figures of speech. When the New Testament writers spoke of Jesus as a propitiation for the sins of his followers, and as having made peace through the blood of the cross, it is not likely that they meant to be understood in the hard and literal sense which has been so commonly given to their words.

"I am astonished and appalled," said Dr. Channing, "by the gross manner in which Christ's blood is often spoken of, as if his outward wounds and bodily sufferings could contribute to our salvation, as if aught else than

his spirit, his truth, could redeem us. On other occasions we use the very words which we thus apply to Christ, and use them rationally. How is it that in religion we so readily part with our common sense? For example, we often say that our liberty was purchased, and our country was saved by the blood of the patriots. And what do we mean? — that the material blood which gushed from their bodies, that their wounds, that their agonies, saved their country! No! We mean that we owe our freedom to men who loved their country more than life, and gladly shed their blood in its defence. By their blood we mean their patriotism, their devotion to freedom, approved in death. We mean the principles for which they died, the spirit which shone forth in their self-sacrifice, and which this sacrifice of their lives spread abroad and strengthened in the community. So by Christ's blood I understand his spirit, his entire devotion to the cause of human virtue and to the will of God. By his cross I mean his celestial love — I mean the great principles of piety and righteousness — in asserting which he died. To be redeemed by his blood is to be redeemed by his goodness. In other words it is to be purified from all sin, and restored to all virtue by the principles, the religion, the character, the all-conquering love of Jesus Christ."

I quote these words from Channing because they set forth with admirable clearness, as it

seems to me, the only rational interpretation of which, in the light of a pure spiritual Christianity, the phrases in question are susceptible. And is it not at least as probable that some such meaning as this was in the minds of the New Testament writers when they used such phrases — even admitting that they were influenced to a considerable extent by ancient modes of thought as well as expression — is it not at least as probable that they had this deeper and more spiritual meaning mainly in view, as it is that they intended to describe the actual suffering of the cross with its purely physical tokens as the effectual means of human redemption? Can we believe that after enjoying the great light of Christ's life and teachings which their help alone enables us to see, they fell so far behind the prophets of an earlier day in their appreciation of the true requirements of God?

For who, according to the word of Christ shall be saved? He who trusts in the merits and the blood of a crucified Redeemer? Rather Zacchæus, who said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." And Jesus said unto him, "This day is salvation come to this house." The publican, who would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," and of whom Jesus said, "I tell you

this man went down to his house justified." The sinful woman who poured out a flood of repentant tears, and whose great love Jesus declared to be the token of her forgiveness. The prodigal, who forsook his evil ways and came back to his father saying, " Father I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Do we not all recognize these as typical examples of Jesus' teaching? And can we find in them a trace of the complicated thories that have been so long current?

It is true that the early followers of Jesus did not always comprehend him. It is true that some of their ideas show the influence of their Jewish training. But if we look at the only passage in the whole New Testament in which the word atonement occurs, we shall perhaps find that they have not had entire justice done them by many who profess to regard them with the greatest reverence. In the fifth chapter of the epistle of St. Paul to the Romans we read, " For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

Here we observe, first, that the reconciliation is described as that of man to God, and not, as certain creeds teach, of God to man — " When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the

death of his son"; and, second, that salvation is represented as following reconciliation, and being effected not by the death of Christ, but by his life: — "Much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Does not this plainly suggest, if it does not distinctly teach the simple and rational view which Unitarians generally hold, according to which, after being reconciled or turned away from our selfishness and drawn to God through the impression made by the absolute self-sacrifice illustrated in the death of Christ, we are saved from our sins and the consequent divine displeasure by the help, the guidance and the inspiration of his life.

I have dwelt on these points of interpretation much longer than I intended from the feeling that the New Testament teachings on this subject ought to be rescued from the perversion to which they are, often unintentionally, subjected, for the sake of the essential truth which they contain. For atonement in the true sense of union with God, represents the deepest need, the most persistent longing, and the loftiest aspiration of the human soul. We have seen how this longing, vaguely felt even in the childhood of mankind, found expression in the ancient rites of sacrifice. We have seen how in one race, at least, it gradually gained a profounder meaning and became much more difficult to satisfy. We have seen how even after the true method of satisfying it was proclaimed by great prophets and illus-

trated by Jesus Christ, the theories and ideas of an elder day influenced, and continue to influence many minds, and to keep in comparative darkness some who have perhaps imagined that above all others they were the very children of light.

And yet these theories may not have been so great a practical hindrance, after all. Just as a man may bask in the sunshine without knowing in the least, scientifically, what sunshine is, so he may enjoy spiritual communion with God and yet be mistaken in all his reasoning about it. Between the opinions in regard to the atonement entertained by Dr. Channing and those of the latest Salvation Army convert from the slums there would be, no doubt, a very wide difference; and yet the practical experience of the atonement may be as genuine in the one case as it was in the other. St. Paul's explanation of the reconciling office of Christ, if we knew with certainty exactly what he meant, might prove to contain a mixture of truth and error; but that would not alter the facts of his personal experience. It is very certain that through Christ the scales were in some way removed from his eyes, and he became a new creature, a lover and not a persecutor of his fellow men — faithful, like his master, even unto death. It is no less certain that the same change has taken place, the same atonement has been effected and is effected to-day, through the power of the same great life, in thousands upon thou-

sands of souls who have become in consequence a blessing instead of a curse to the world.

"I, if I be lifted up," said Jesus, "will draw all men unto me." It was a splendid prophecy; and in the degree in which it has already been fulfilled, the number that have been drawn to him, the extent to which his influence is felt to-day, we have an earnest of still greater results — a ground for the hope of a more and more complete fulfilment in future ages.

IX

THE FAMILY OF GOD

CLAYTON R. BOWEN

THE FAMILY OF GOD

"The Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named."— EPH. iii, 15.

"Jesus promised the Kingdom of God; what came was the church," so has a modern scholar expressed a simple historical fact with which traditional Christianity has never perfectly squared itself. Apologists there have indeed been in plenty who have argued the identity of the church, or that section of the church to which they belonged, with the promised kingdom, but a more exact and unbiased exegesis has shown such identification to be an act of dogmatic violence. The fact remains that what Jesus announced in no uncertain words as near at hand, the Kingdom of God, did not come, has not come, upon the world. As a consequence of his work, we have, instead, a vast ecclesiastical organization, the Christian church, or — shall we rather say? — the complex of Christian churches. There can be no question that Jesus was not aiming to found the Christian church, a new religious cult which should largely displace Judaism and the other religions of the time, although that is what came to pass as the result of his brief ministry. His expectation of the immediate future was of something far different from the actual event. Can it then be urged that Chris-

tianity, as it came to be, was wholly foreign to Jesus' plan and purpose, to his spirit and his ideal? Would it all seem strange and disappointing to him could he know the course of things in the last nineteen centuries? Certain disappointments there would inevitably be, of that we may all be convinced. Yet I believe that what has come to pass is not essentially foreign to the ideal and the dream that lay at the heart of all Jesus' work for men.

It is true, to begin with, that Jesus did preach the speedy coming of the Kingdom of God, using that term essentially in the contemporary Jewish sense. We may not yield to the temptation of our own preferences, and modernize all his eschatological utterances into timeless oracles concerning the sovereignty of God in the human soul. No, when he took up the proclamation of John the Baptist, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," he meant it as John meant it, as his hearers would understand it, of an imminent catastrophic miraculous dawning upon the world of a perfect political, social and moral order, in which Israel should come into its own as the chosen people of God. And this conviction gave Jesus his life's task and dominated all his preaching. "Make ready by change of heart and life, for the coming kingdom, that ye be worthy to enter into it." The "Kingdom of God" is his inclusive term, as it had been his people's for centuries, for the new order for whose

advent he is preparing men, which he himself, as Messiah, expects one day to establish. And yet — it is a singular fact not generally noted and commented on that he practically never calls God King. The proclaimer of the Kingdom of God, in all his preaching of religion to his fellow-men, does not use for the divine Majesty the title of King, but always the title of Father. In other words, the conception of the relations of men and God in the perfect order to-be which actually dominates his heart and utterance is not the *Kingdom of God* at all, but the *Family of God.* This is a fact sufficiently striking, and one which must be clearly realized if we are at all to understand the teaching of Jesus and his real significance.

What is the explanation, then, of this curious double conception of God and His ultimate relations with men, in the words of Jesus? Briefly, it is this. The term "Kingdom of God," and the expectation which centered about it, Jesus inherited from his own people, as he inherited their language and their customs. He believed devoutly and unquestioningly in the coming kingdom and found his life's mission in its proclamation. And yet it is not the ideal to which his own innermost life most keenly responds. When he is speaking of the *Kingdom* of God he is speaking as a Jew; when he speaks of the *Fatherhood* of God, he is speaking as a man. In one case he speaks as the devout ad-

herent of *a* religion; in the other, as the spokesman of religion. When he actually comes close to the men and women about him, yearning to bring each of them into the blessedness of the perfect relation with God which he knows, he forgets about the King and his subjects, and thinks only of father and child, of the tenderness and intimacy of the perfect family. He is himself, surely, unconscious that he is uniting two points of view; he has no logical interpretation of the expression which his religious experience finds. Always he is the Jewish rabbi and prophet declaring with sincerity and passion his people's hope and dream, but always also the rabbi and prophet is suffused and interpenetrated by the purely religious man, the human soul in intimate fellowship with the divine Father.

And this real heart of Jesus' utterance it was which persisted, which had the power to persist and to shape the future. The scheme of the coming Kingdom, the Messianic conception of Jesus himself, all the specifically Jewish elements, that bound his message to *a* religion, an older cult, these little by little were put into the background, and fell away. The old terms have indeed never been given up, but they were early charged with a specifically new content. The family idea, that which was expressive, not of *a* religion, but of religion itself, in its essence, really shaped the course of the church's early development. We see the process going on in our

New Testament — in the letters of Paul, in the book of Acts, in the reflections of church thought and feeling which our gospels give. The followers of Jesus, as bound in the fellowship of their common faith and hope, bear each the sacred name of *brother*, and even the glory of the coming kingdom, though in no wise dimmed, is really conceived as the glad free life of children with a father, as the perfect family. "He that overcometh shall inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. XXI, 7). Jesus' name for God was unanimously adopted by his followers, and the content of his spiritual service for them was thus simply but inclusively stated: "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become children of God." So powerful was the real religious impulse of Jesus' inner life over against all his inherited forms of thought and expectation. And thus did he promise the kingdom of God, while that which came was the family of God.

But we all know that no religious impulse, however pure and strong, can exist in itself alone, as a disembodied spirit. We know that Christianity did not remain, indeed never actually existed, as a simple expression of *religion*. It needs became, almost at once, *a* religion, a cult, as was Judaism, or any one of the Greek or Roman or Oriental cults of the time. And so it has remained to our day; only so could it have been preserved to our day. Now all about us

is being raised, in this inquiring age, the question as to the finality of this religion in which the spiritual impulse of Jesus took embodiment and name. Is Christianity final, is it absolute? The claim of finality is made for many conflicting religions; should we make it for ours? What does the question mean? Are we asking if the Christianity of Paul or of Irenæus or of the Nicene council of 325, or of Augustine, or of the dark ages, of the Scholastics or Luther or Calvin, of Edwards or Wesley or Channing or Ritschl is final? To ask these questions is to answer them. The Christianity of every one of these men or periods has been changed, has passed away. Nowhere can we find *a* Christianity, as a coördinated system of religious thought and practice, that is final. We surely cannot expect our own Christianity to be final. Our faith in the onward upward progress of man allows no exception in the sphere of the religious life. There has certainly appeared, as yet, no Christianity that is final.

Does this mean, then, that we all, through the centuries, have misapprehended the real teaching of Jesus, that his gospel, if we might discover it in its purity, would be final and absolute? This question as to the finality of Jesus' own religion may receive a truthful answer both in the affirmative and in the negative. We are constantly the victims of the ambiguity of our own language, and confuse *religion* as such, with *a* religion, an organized religious cult. If we speak

of Jesus as having *a* religion, that religion was Judaism. He was a faithful member of that cult, and had no intention of being anything else. The finality of Jesus' religion, if we mean by religion the organized fellowship of faith and worship, would not mean the finality of Christianity at all, but of Judaism. For Jesus was in no sense a Christian, but a Jew. And Judaism, even at its highest reach, even as it came to expression in Jesus, is not final, as Christianity, in its noblest representative, is not final.

But Jesus' *religion*, conceived as his relation with God, *is* final, not because it is his, but because it is religion. *Religion* is always final — *a* religion never is. What Jesus was actually teaching and impressing on men was the sense of their personal relation to the great Life and Law and Power and Love behind the world, that relation conceived as the tenderest and most intimate filial piety and affection. That is the very heart of religion, in its last analysis; that is timeless, and has no relations to any particular place or cult. The hour cometh and now is when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall men worship the Father; His true worshippers shall worship Him in spirit and in truth in the child-like love and trust and obedience of their lives. This is Jesus' religion, and it is final. No new revelation can ever come to the sons of men which shall contradict this religious experience, which shall show God not to be the Father

of our souls, which shall relegate the brotherhood of man to the limbo of outworn superstitions, and substitute a relation of man to man at once more true and of more worth to the moral life. To the future development of religious experience we can indeed set no bounds, but that development must surely only more clearly and movingly set forth the thought of God and men as bound in an association of which the tender home-words — father, child, brother, sister — are the truest expressions. The *religion of Jesus* is final — for *religion* is final, by whatever prophet it be spoken, in whatever cult it come to expression.

I have urged that religion is in its essence best described as a family relationship; I would further urge that all *religions* are likewise essentially families. The analogy seems to me a perfect one. The day is past when we can pass judgment, good or ill, on a man's personal religion by naming or characterizing *the* religion to which he professes allegiance. *Religion* is at home in all religions; all religions have their portion of finality, their share of spiritual power, their gifts of consolation and peace. "Which has not taught weak wills how much they can? Which has not fallen on the dry heart like rain?" On none may we look scornfully or with animosity. Each is a great family, whose ancestry and whose traditions, in most cases, go back into a remote past, whose history is glorified by saints and

prophets and men of might. A man is a Christian, we say, or a Mohammedan, or a Behaist, or a Parsee, or a Jew; we have not yet said anything of his religion, we have only mentioned his family name. It is as if we said he is a Brown or an Adams — we have not said anything as to his family virtues, his love and care for his wife or child or parents. These qualities we expect in every family, and it is not their presence which distinguishes one normal family from another, but simply the lines of historical ancestry, the factors of birth and kinship. Whatever be the *religious* family name, whatever the ancestry reaching down from the past which has produced us as set in our present religious family, let us expect of ourselves and of those in every family the family characteristic, that is, religion in its simplest, truest form. No man need depreciate his own family in order to appreciate his neighbour's. No man need be the less loyal and grateful to his own forbears because names of greater note appear in his neighbor's genealogy.

Can we not forget the differences of name, of ancestry and history, and live in fellowship with the other families in this community of the world? But can we not also do this without forgetting our own kin, our own fathers and mothers and the long line of honorable descent of which we are the culminating representatives to-day? It is always a sad thing when a man is really forced to break with the religious family out of which has

come his life, to which he owes his earliest nurture. It must sometimes be done, even as it is sometimes necessary to break with the family to which we are bound by ties of blood. But it is a tragedy in the one case as in the other; it is an abnormality. Surely one should as little wish to break with his historic past and seek another religion because he is personally drawn to its representatives, or because some of his own spiritual kin are little to his taste, as to make a similar transfer of his outer family connection. When religion is understood in its proper sense, then both in this mountain and in Jerusalem shall men worship the Father, in spirit and in truth. No man shall need to leave *his* religion to find *religion*. Then shall we no longer talk of the Christian religion, the Jewish religion, but rather of religion as Christianity, religion as Judaism, as Buddhism, and the rest. We shall no longer find wise or needful the demand which the centuries of missions have been making — that a man should of a sudden leave his father and his mother, his ancestry, his name, his home, his traditions, and become transplanted into the currents of another family life where he has no past and no real points of attachment.

And as we deprecate such forcible adoption from one household to another, so shall we deprecate the impulse toward expatriation which sometimes urges a man to sever himself from his own family, from any family — the impulse

which says, "I will have no ancestry save humanity, no kin save all men, no home save the world. With Jesus I shall say: Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother." He who thus speaks forgets that this utterance of Jesus came out of a bitter tragedy in his experience, a tragedy forced upon him from without, not chosen by himself, a violation of all that is holiest in the common life of men. And he forgets, too, that though religion is at home in all religions, it is rarely at home in no religion, that it cannot easily breathe and live as itself alone, but ever seeks embodiment. The men whose lives have really moved the world religiously have been men who had *a* religion, within which all their dreams and ideals might find shelter and nurture, and come to expression. The perfect example is again Jesus the loyal Jew; or we may remember Francis the Catholic. And if inward monitions or outward strife forced upon these leaders of men the tragedy of a complete renunciation of the family of their birth and training, then they set valiantly to work to found and father a new family, as whose ancestor they became honored by later generations. So Luther, so in their time the Buddha and Mohammed. Such a violent severing of the family relationship will be rendered unnecessary and even impossible by the truer conception of religion which is making its gradual way in the world. When religion shall no

longer be synonymous with creed or opinion, but with love and service, then no man's ancestral faith need cause him trouble or searchings of heart. Even as our forefathers in the flesh shared many opinions and joined in many practices which we have long since outgrown or repudiated, without disowning our ancestry or being ashamed of our name, so should we be outwardly free and inwardly desirous to keep the shelter of our spiritual homes, though we leave behind doctrines and rites deemed precious by our fathers in the faith.

In the new day of religion the church shall never again repudiate the family spirit by substituting as its bond of union an agreement in opinion, nor violate that spirit by driving from the gracious influences of the household its own children, born and reared at its fireside. In that day we shall be to one another brothers, not fellow-believers. When all our partial believing is swallowed up in perfect sight, then love shall still abide unchanged. In the day that is coming there may be fewer religions and churches, certainly the growth of religion will not consist in the multiplication of new sects and denominations — but surely religion itself shall in that day grow and develop mightily within all existent families of God, and shall fulfil its divinely appointed task of moulding humanity into the kingdom of God — that is, one great family, whose fellowship touches every life on our planet

with the binding blessing of brotherhood, and with the tenderest, deepest, fullest love and trust towards the common Father.

If this is our ideal for the future of the race, let us strive also to make it the ideal for the present of the family of God into which we have been born. I would plead for a deeper feeling for the history that lies behind our present religious relationships, for a more intelligent, more grateful, more loyal appreciation of our spiritual ancestry, for that great current of religious thought and life out of which we have been begotten. We here, as members of religious societies in America, belong to the Christian family — any preference of ours can as little change that as any other fact of history, as it could change the family name we bear, or our physiological ancestry. All that has been fixed for us by the past. Once for all, history has developed so and so and not otherwise, such and such a specific process of development has resulted in the various existences of to-day. In our case, it has been the development of the Christian church. Buddhism and Mohammedanism have had their field of service elsewhere than in America, or in England, Holland, Germany, whence came our fathers. Judaism has been of direct influence only through the permanent impress it made upon Christianity.

We are Christians — not using that term as connoting any fixed doctrines or opinions, not

as identifying ourselves with the Christianity of any time or individual or sect, not as implying any peculiar set of virtues or excellences, but simply as giving our family name, and declaring the plain fact of our ancestry. As to doctrines, those you and I hold may often be duplicated much more nearly in members of families of other than the Christian name than in many who are of our own lineage. As to virtues and excellences, it is hard to see how a good *Christian* behavior could differ from good *Jewish* behavior, or any *good* behavior. You and I might well feel restive under the Christian name if it limited us to the beliefs and forms of any individual Christian who ever lived, or even to those of Jesus himself, or if it claimed to exclude from our spiritual fellowship and sympathy those of another name and heritage. But as expressive of the body of traditions, of the history and the development of our own family, our own household, the name is sacred; it must call out our deepest loyalty and devotion. We are always being reminded that the safeguarding of the civic family is the greatest contribution to the welfare of society: even so surely, I believe, is the cultivation of the church family the bulwark of the welfare of religion. The disintegration of the home, the severing of the bonds that tie men to a past of hallowed associations, is as dire in its effects in one sphere as in the other.

I can say what I mean most effectively in

words which Charles Wagner has written of the home,

"To give up the ancestral hearth, to let the family traditions fall into desuetude, to abandon the simple family customs, for whatever return, is to make a fool's bargain, and such is the place in society of family life, that if this be impoverished, the trouble is felt throughout the whole social organism . . . Whence does the individual draw his originality, this unique something which, joined to the distinctive qualities of others, constitutes the wealth and strength of a community? He can draw it only from his own family. Destroy the assemblage of memories and practices whence emanates for each home an atmosphere in miniature, and you dry up the sources of character, sap the strength of public spirit. It concerns the country that each home be a world, profound, respected, communicating to its members an ineffaceable moral imprint. . . . Nothing else can take [the place of family feeling] for in it lie in germ all those fine and simple virtues which assure the strength of social institutions. And the very base of family feeling is respect for the past — for the best possessions of a family are its common memories. An intangible, indivisible and inalienable capital, these memories constitute a sacred fund that each member of a family ought to consider more precious than anything else he possesses." All that is very fine and very true in respect to the

households of which we severally form a part, but I feel that it is equally true of our spiritual families, of our churches, of our religions. The assemblage of memories and practices which connects us in an unbroken line with Jesus and Paul and Augustine and St. Francis and Luther and Wesley and Channing and Phillips Brooks — this is indeed something very sacred and precious, to break with which would be indeed to do violence to our soul's highest life and to our promise of spiritual efficiency in the world's service.

To take but one example, we read and must continue to read, in our services of worship, the sacred Scriptures of our fathers — sacred not because of superhuman origin and character, but because of human associations and sentiments. The function of the Scripture reading in our services is not primarily edification or instruction; judged by an absolute standard a hundred modern preachers may give us homilies superior to those of Peter, James and Jude. We have history more edifying, poetry more inspiring, than much in the pages of the Old Testament. Our sermons ought to make full use of it, and of the writings treasured as sacred by other families. But our Scripture we read as a man draws from a secret drawer a letter faded and yellow with time, and reads it with tears and strange softenings of heart, because it is from the lost wife of his youth, or from his father, or from a treasured and honored ancestor. How meaning-

less to tell him that as a letter it is surpassed by a thousand others, that his neighbor's wife or child or grandsire has composed an epistle of far greater merit, which we offer him for his perusal. He knows not what we mean. What sacredness have the strangers' words for him, however wise and beautiful, however precious in the family circle where they have their true place? In his hour of meditation and memory they are an intrusion, though at the proper season he shall rejoice in them as the product of a quick heart and a ready pen. In no religion of the world are the Scriptures, whatever claim be made, really read and adjudged at their actual face value, but rather always as family documents, with a power which is not in the written word. In this day, when old things are passing away and all things are becoming new, it behooves the Christian church, as it behooves every religious fellowship, to cherish this bond of union with the past that is the source of so much of to-day's power. Such bonds are none too frequent; without superstition, but with rational appreciation, let us keep them unsevered. So shall our spiritual home be to us, not a temporary tenement, within whose walls we have no past and no future, but an ancestral family abode, "a world profound, respected, communicating to its members an ineffaceable moral imprint."

All about us are churches whose organized life and practice is shaped by one and another basic

principle; let us see to it that in the religious families of which we shall form a part the analogy is followed of those churches the prime words of whose declaration of faith are *Fatherhood* and *Brotherhood.*

X

A SOCIAL GOSPEL

NICHOLAS PAINE GILMAN

A SOCIAL GOSPEL

The subject of my discourse this evening is A Social Gospel. My text is the familiar words of the Prophet Micah (I follow the Revised Version):

"To do justly, to love kindness and to walk humbly with thy God."— MICAH vi, 8.

You will observe that I do not say The Social Gospel, for I do not presume to have discovered the only gospel for Society. I would speak more modestly rather, of some of the characteristics of a social gospel, which should give it a clear title to that name.

The prophets and the psalmists of Israel so closely identified themselves with their people that one naturally looks for a motto for a treatment of a social gospel to the Old Testament. The New Testament gives us many a noble word that might serve to head a discourse on "A personal Gospel," but the intense social consciousness of the Jewish people expresses more closely the need which we feel to-day of an evangel for modern society. Our present notion is that no man can save himself from the bottomless pit of immorality by thinking chiefly on his own salvation: such thinking is itself condemnation, self-pronounced. There is a paradox of blessedness, as well as a paradox of happiness. To neither can we attain by making it our object of pur-

suit. No man can be saved alone. Moreover, when any true gospel for to-day rings in our ears, we shall hear much of society, of that very society which the mystic, intent on his own security, practically leaves out of reckoning, in his rhapsody of words; we shall hear the stern daughter of the voice of God commanding, first of all, "Do justly." Social justice, first and foremost! And then human kindness: our-kindness. *Love* kindness! Only in the third place says the voice, not to be put by, "Walk with thy God, not in self-sufficiency, not in mystical exaltation: not in metaphysical dogmatism, not in pharisaic pride of attainment of ritual exactness, but *humbly*, not defining, not refining, but adoring, with thy hand upon thy mouth. Canst thou by searching find out God? The heavens of heavens are His, but the earth hath He given to the children of men." They need to live here not a life of saintly separateness, but a life of human endeavor *together*, by a social, not an individual law.

We have many so-called gospels offered us to-day — a gospel for an age of doubt; a gospel for an age of sin; a gospel of atonement; a gospel of character; a gospel of divine immanence; a gospel of divine transcendence; a gospel of pantheism; a gospel of culture; a gospel of service; a gospel of rest; a gospel of work. What interests us in this hour is none of these, but a gospel that may be rightly called a gospel

for society, a gospel *of* society, a gospel *from* society: a social gospel. It is the demand of the day, the demand of the age.

A natural mistake is made by many warm-hearted Christian preachers when they identify this much-desired social gospel with the economic scheme known as Socialism. Notwithstanding the fact that Socialism has now been before the world long enough for its deep defects as a scheme of thought, and its impracticability as a polity for civilized man to be fully realized by the judicious, new recruits from time to time appear, especially among the teachers of "liberal orthodoxy," as the phrase once ran. With all respect for the deep earnestness and warm enthusiasm for humanity which animates such men as the preacher of the City Temple in London, older men who have been reasoning freely and learning much about these matters for a generation can accept neither the exegesis nor the economics of this Christian Socialist. It is too late in the history of New Testament Criticism to offer to intelligent men of to-day an ideal Jesus whose conception of the Kingdom of God is found to be strictly in accord with the doctrines of Karl Marx and with the history of the Jewish people as it actually befell after the crucifixion. Mr. Campbell, in his book on Christianity and the Social Order, tells us that the all-important thing in primitive Christian preaching was its intense belief in the coming of an ideal social order

in which men should no longer feel any desire to strive against, or to injure, one another. Yet certainly the Gospel of John, whatever its precise date of composition may have been, is here a better witness than the twentieth-century preacher, and this represents Jesus as declaring on a most momentous occasion, "My Kingdom is not of this world." Dr. Sanday, the noted Oxford scholar, has much more weight as an impartial expositor of the Gospel teaching than Mr. Campbell, and he says in his latest volume: "The centre of gravity of our Lord's mission, even as it might have been seen and followed by a contemporary, lay beyond the grave."

The easy method of reading the conceptions of one age into the utterances of another, centuries earlier, is not new, but it does not long convince the historic sense. We may find an excuse indeed for the London preacher saying that the Kingdom of God, as Jesus understood it, could never have been anything less than "a universal brotherhood, a social order in which every individual unit would find his highest happiness in being and doing the utmost for the whole." But the excuse can only be that this is a noble idea in itself of the Kingdom, and that his theological scheme compels him to attribute this to the theological Christ; despite the plainness of the record, he rules out what Jesus of Nazareth is reported to have said, and puts into his mouth ideas which are in full contra-

diction to his reputed utterances.[1] Dr. Réville has declared more wisely that economic laws had no existence for Jesus; they lay outside the sphere of his interests. There is then *no* excuse for the attribution to Jesus of the scheme of Marxian Socialism, as Mr. Campbell expounds it with so much confidence. This scheme has been thoroughly riddled by the most liberal and progressive economists, and students of contemporary thought may well be astonished to find it taken up again by Christian Socialists at the very time when its essential ideas are being steadily abandoned by the most thoughtful socialists themselves. Socialism may have a future, but it will not be Marxian Socialism.

The fundamental difficulty with the Christian Socialists is that they fully realize the need of a social gospel for modern man, but they have not been trained in their schools of divinity to respect the historical meaning of the Gospel of Jesus, and they have not been taught to compare wisely with the social teachings of other religions the teachings of Christianity. They therefore father upon Jesus of Nazareth the most philanthropic doctrines to which the modern world has come, and even baseless and *doctrinaire* schemes of economic life and social progress which the mind of modern man does not accept. They are

1 "The Christian life, far from being a scheme of permanent social regeneration, was originally conceived as preparatory to an imminent millennium."
(L. T. Hobhouse.)

trying to occupy two distinct, widely different, and irreconcilable positions. Christianity, as commonly held, is a profoundly individualistic religion; it is not a philosophical or scientific code of morals; it is not a program for civilization to follow, step by step. It is a religion, not a morality.

The latest historian of the evolution of morals has wisely said, "Historically, Christianity has, in fact, no theory of society by which to guide itself. Its doctrine is personal. The common life that it contemplates is a life of brotherly love, a community of saints where all things are in common and lawsuits are not, nor any other mode of maintaining order by the strong arm. Hence, amid all the wonderful descriptions of charity, of love, of self-surrender, we hear very little of *justice*. Indeed, how could it be otherwise? What need of justice, when love readily yields all? Why talk of a fair division to one who, if his cloak is taken, will make that a ground for giving up his garment? What need for equal rights among men who claim nothing for themselves and yield all they have to all who want? The code of the Sermon on the Mount appears to contemplate what in modern phrase we should call a voluntaryist or anarchist community. Nonresistance is its central feature. There is to be no fighting, no revenge, no lawsuits, no oaths, no self-defence, no insistence on private property, nor excessive provision for the

future. If there is to be any marrying or giving in marriage at all, there is to be no divorcing of wives [for it is probable that Jesus made no exception at all to his strict rule]. There is to be unbounded charity without display. Altogether, a life that might be lived for a while by a picked brotherhood of perfect men and women." (L. T. Hobhouse; "Morals in Evolution." Pt. II, p. 152.)

The social controversies of our century evidently cannot, evidently will not, issue in any such naïve construction of our complex human life as this. Jesus' Kingdom of God was a religious ideal, not a secular polity, not an ideal that duly regards all sides of the moral life of civilized man. Our actual ethics, the ethical code which rules the life of the best and wisest of modern men, is an ethics to which Greece and Rome and Judaism have contributed very much; indeed, they have given us the staple of our morality. With them we believe in the goodness of the world and the worth of human nature, the value of the intellect and the virtues of the mind, the desirability of self-assertion of the reason, the beauty of large-mindedness; we admire courage and self-respect; we believe in bodily excellence, in the temperate uses of wealth, in refinement, in culture, in the development of human faculty. All these things we practice sedulously, six days in the week. On the seventh we listen, with more or less respect and with more or

less self-condemnation, to the ascetic and unworldly counsels of the New Testament, read by preachers whose practice on week-days is even such as our own.

The explanation of the inconsistency is not far to seek. The New Testament emphasizes some very deep and very important phases of our human life, its experiences, especially, of sin and sorrow. It offers thus the needed counterpoise to the ethics of the secular world, the morals of the natural man. But, to use a philosophic formula, it is this world — this world of human institutions, of business, of knowledge, art, political life, refinement, culture, power, self-assertion, civilization — it is this world of strength and natural greatness that forms the *thesis* of our life. The New Testament tells us of self-denial, of sacrifice, of death and a life to come: this is the *antithesis* of our work-day life, of our week-day world. It would be a very false conception, a very unbalanced life, a very poor world, if this were all; if it could possibly take the place of the substance of our ordinary life, and become the thesis, instead of the antithesis. Human life reconciles the two views in a *synthesis* that gives its due share, its rightful place, to each in a higher unity. But to-night I am chiefly concerned with so much of the contradiction as is involved in the fact that the Gospel of Jesus is chiefly personal, fundamentally ascetic some would say, certainly very unworldly, and

fundamentally a religious, not an ethical ideal.

Not attempting the impossible task of doing complete justice to this view of life in a few minutes, I dwell, with much risk of misconstruction, on the other side, the social, rather than the personal gospel.

We need a Social Gospel to-day. Such a "glad news" cannot rest upon a more or less doubtful exegesis of the words of Jesus, a more or less strained interpretation of even his most personal precepts. It will incorporate all the teachings of the New Testament, so far as they have been approved by the deepest experience of the race; but it will rest primarily upon human nature, in its great constancies from age to age. This good news must be for *social* man; it must therefore give society the first place, not the second. We recognize, of course, the fact that society is made up of persons: at the same time, it is true that society makes persons. The fundamental justification of a social gospel is the profoundly social nature of man. He is a social being,

> "Made of social earth,
> Friend and brother from his birth."

Our social gospel will be a gospel for *this* generation, not for any one of the past generations, or for any one of the generations to come; it must meet the call *we* make, and answer to the need that *we* feel. Not that our needs are

fundamentally different from those that our fathers felt, not that human nature is very changeable in its essence. Our civilization, especially, does not render self-control unnecessary, or self-denial superfluous throughout life. The great realities of the moral and spiritual life are constant, for human nature was long since essentially *set* in the mould of experience. But every age has its own angle of vision for these realities and it speaks of them in its own dialect. To-day our dialect is social, not individual.

A social gospel puts in the forefront, alike of blessing and of responsibility, the great institutions of human nature. Fundamental to all these — not in a line with other institutions, but their underlying cause — is the family, a bond not to be lightly assumed, not to be lightly cast aside, but always sacred, because so deep-lying. Filial *piety;* indeed, the ancients spoke well, so saying: "the religion of the *hearth* "— where should religion be found, if not at this vital centre? A social gospel will not, indeed, say that under no circumstances may men and women separate from each other, when once unwisely, hastily, rashly engaged, and unfitly married, not mated — only to find that the Divine Power, speaking through human nature, has had very little to do with their union. It was not consulted, while thoughtlessness and immaturity have had very much to do with it. But marriage is a deep social bond, and a social gospel will put it first

among its natural sacraments; its vows shall be vows of reason, and their maintenance the task of faith and honor at their highest pitch.

In very ancient days group morality was an important part of all duty. The father represented the family; he was its priest and ruler; the family was an undying corporation, and he held its joint property as trustee. He gave his children in marriage, not symbolically, but literally, and he was responsible to every other family for the right behavior of all the members of his group. Over this the son, in his time, succeeding his father, bore rule. The child was the father's. Modern liberty says not *always* his, not after maturity; but it does not incline to say with the consistent socialist, "*never* his, but always society's child." Each child has a natural right because an indefeasible claim to a mother's love, to a father's care; children cannot be reared by wholesale, suckled at the breast of society, with a bureaucratic régime for a father. The children's need is the parents' blessing; the social gospel speaks most plainly to men through this primal method of preserving the race of man. Professor Shaler said well: "There are doubtless many ways in which men may make a new heaven and a new earth of their dwelling-place, but the simplest of all ways is through a fond, discerning, and individual care of each child." A social gospel does not grudgingly say with the Christian Apostle, "It is better to marry

than to burn." But it blesses the home as the beautiful centre of pure human affection; it rebukes the ascetic who denies the right of half the human race to its natural offices of wife and mother. He would leave the other half unblessed by the deepest passion that can fill its days; not united in mankind's most sacred bond, not units but individual halves. Man and woman crave the unity in diversity of sex; the ascetic would leave them the solitariness of the man or the woman *alone*.

A social gospel says first to all the children of men in society, "Do *justly*." It does not declare foremost, or without mentioning justice, "Love one another." Kindness may be needed to teach many of us what justice truly is, but there is no substitute for justice under the wide heavens. "Justice satisfies every one, and justice only," as Emerson said. No age before our own has made so persistent a demand as ours for the doing of justice by every class to every other class. The cry of the workingman of this century is not for charity, even if charity be interpreted to mean love; it is for *right*, for the fair choice of opportunities, for the rightful portion of good things of the earth, for the dealing out of justice by law-givers and wealth-makers. Not the amiable relief of the particular poor man with a passing alms, but the extirpation of the causes of poverty, mental and physical; not mild exhortation to the employer to love his

workman, but the embodiment in his relation with them of more of mutual regard and helpfulness and strengthening than a cash *nexus* alone can give, to remedy the causes of social antagonism at their very root in some manner of injustice; to promote unity of feeling by creating a real unity of interests — this is doing justice, and loving kindness.

And what better way is there of walking humbly with God than so to walk righteously and kindly with man? We have indeed to respect the immense range of human impulses, powers, faculties, tastes and acquirements. We must refrain from proclaiming in the name of a social gospel any class narrowness, any partisan judgment, any religious partialism, any dictate of ignorance, passion or inhumanity. For everything that is human a social gospel has tolerance, for nothing that is inhuman; it will seek out the social causes of crime, even, in a spirit of *kindness*. "Society wishes to be just to you," it says to the outcast. "It loves kindness, for it loves its kind. Justice is the law of the social gospel; kindness is its inspiration. We seek to save *not* our souls, but *your* souls; let *our* souls, if need be, perish in the endeavor!" Let all individual care for our own separate souls — Stoic, Epicurean, Christian, Buddhist — begone. Save us *together*, Almighty Justice, Eternal Kindness! or save us not at all, we say.

A social gospel calls on men to assert their

rights, as well as to do their duties; to live self-respectingly, ambitiously, nobly; to develop the germs of all that is good and fair within them; to lay hold of social tasks and to live a life of public spirit. It laments the "accursed wantlessness" of the very poor; it rejoices in the thirst for art and knowledge which the meanest may show, which is to be gratified for the good of all. It denounces sins against society committed by persons or by corporations, as worse even than sins against persons only. Never forgetting the worth of personal character, or the need for individual helpfulness, it is intent on social salvation from social diseases.

A Social Gospel has thus its great hopes and an inspiring ideal, based upon the widest view of the progress of human society. Science and philosophy unite in declaring the tremendous fact of ethical evolution to be the most important truth of our social life here on earth. This evolution has now become, very largely, self-conscious. We are aware of our many needs as a society; we know some, at least, of the paths which we must follow to satisfy these needs: thought and reason will steadily increase the knowledge of such paths. As Mr. Hobhouse says, "The slowly wrought-out dominance of mind in things is the central fact in all evolution." Here is "the germ of a religion and an ethics which are as far removed from materialism as from the optimistic theology of the metaphysician, or the

half-naïve creeds of the churches. . . . It is a message of hope to the world, of suffering lessened and strife assuaged, not by fleeing from reason to the bosom of faith, but by the increasing rational control of things by that collective wisdom which is all that we directly know of the Divine." The Father and We are One!

The Social Gospel has its peculiar saints; they introduce lasting social reforms, found great philanthropic institutions, and set inspiring examples of social usefulness, from the days of John Howard and Elizabeth Fry down to those of Samuel Chapman Armstrong, and Josephine Shaw Lowell. "How many years" this last "woman of sorrows,

> With all her widowed love, immeasurably
> Ministered unto the abused and stricken
> And all the oppressed and suffering of mankind.
> Herself forgetting, but never those in need:
> Her whole sweet soul lost in her loving work.
> Pondering the endless problems of the poor.
> Endeavoring the help that shall not hurt:
> Seeking to build in every human heart
> A temple of justice."

This modern social saint wrote a high and stern parable of the Valley of Industry, and lived in the spirit of Mr. Gilder's lines.

XI

JESUS THE FULFILMENT

HENRY PRESERVED SMITH

JESUS THE FULFILMENT

Time is an essential element in the processes of nature. No one but a child expects his flowers to bloom the day after they are planted. In the processes of history, however, we are impatient when things are slow in ripening. Jesus himself compares the kingdom to seed sown in the ground which must have time to produce the blade, and then the ear, before we can see the full corn in the ear. The pessimistic preacher of the Old Testament was a pessimist because he saw no progress: "The sun ariseth and the sun goeth down, and hasteth again to the place whence he arose. The wind goeth towards the south and turneth about towards the north, and the wind returneth again to its circuits. All the rivers run to the sea, yet the sea is not full; to the place whither the rivers go thither they go again. All things are full of weariness; man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing nor the ear with hearing. That which hath been is that which shall be and that which hath been done is that which shall be done, and there is no new thing under the sun." The matter with the man is that he cannot discover progress. The world seems to him to present everlasting sameness; it is one continual grind, because the perpetual motion seems to lead nowhither.

We have an advantage over the ancient philoso-

pher in that we can take a longer view. The incessant repetition of the same round is indeed wearisome. But if with each round we make a little gain we have the confidence that we are moving somewhither. History has been rewritten in our day, just as natural science has been rewritten, because we have discovered the law of progress and growth. We are no longer concerned with battles and sieges, with great captains and their guns and drums. We see that what we want to know is the social movement, the progress of mankind. Great events, as they are called, are now seen to be significant only as they reveal social forces, as they make visible the forward movement of masses of men. Great men are no longer isolated phenomena, worthy of study as ultimate facts; they are symptoms of their times, products of their environment, or rather of their environment and of heredity.

Some consciousness of this fact was present to the mind of Jesus when he claimed that he came not to destroy but to fulfil, and in the mind of his disciples when they declared that he came in the fulness of times. Jesus (humanly speaking) could not have come at any other age than the age at which he did come, nor in any other country than Judea. His own consciousness of this fact passed over into his church, and the thought most prominent in the minds of his followers was that he was the predicted Messiah. The fullest expression of this belief that has come down to us

is in the words put into the mouth of the arisen Jesus himself: "These are the words which I spake while I was yet with you; that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me." Critical questions need not detain us. We take the words here as expressive of the faith of the early church. The belief is that all parts of the Old Testament (for the three parts of the Hebrew Bible are indicated by the words Law, Prophets and Psalms) were predictive of Jesus.

Now, frankly we must concede that the way in which the early church attempted to verify its belief by pointing out direct and specific prophecies of Christ, does not command the assent of thinking men to-day. There was no doubt in the Old Testament a predictive element, an adumbration of a great deliverer to come. But the texts which the New Testament writers interpreted in this sense often bear a quite different meaning. The argument from prophecy, as it has so often been presented by Christian scholars, is now rarely adduced, and when adduced it fails to command our confidence. Our historic apprehension has advanced beyond that of the Fathers. We are compelled therefore to ask ourselves whether there is no element of truth in the claim made for Jesus — that he was the fulfilment of the earlier dispensation.

Our inquiry here is really an inquiry for val-

ues. The early disciples must have found in Jesus something which gave them the same sort of satisfaction, only in a larger degree, which they had found in the Bible of their fathers. Let us notice this in detail. In the first part of the Old Testament which we call the Law, we have the foundation on which the pious Jew based his religious life. This, as we all know, is an elaborate code of regulations for the individual as well as for the nation. As a code of laws these regulations must be obeyed, and to be obeyed they must present some motive, for men do not subject themselves to a code of rules without the hope of gaining something or the fear of losing something. What, now, did the Israelites hope to gain by this minute and punctilious obedience to the laws? The answer is clear: They hoped to gain access to God, and what they feared in case of disobedience was exclusion from His presence. The Law is Israel's way of approach to God. He who observes it may come with confidence. To this end the sacrifices and priesthood are ordained and regulated. The worshipper must come with an offering. When the sacrifice had been duly brought before God, God deigned to look upon His servant and made him welcome.

The idea, then, at the basis of the law is the idea of mediation. This is even more clear as we look at the priesthood. The common man must have some one to present his offering, to see that it is correctly sacrificed, and to pronounce the

benediction which gives assurance of the divine favor. To modern men this idea of mediation — especially in its sacrificial form — is unintelligible or unsympathetic. We should regard it as a step backward were the altar of God again to smoke with the daily sacrifice of lambs or bullocks. But with the Jew of nineteen hundred years ago it was different. The system of sacrifice and priesthood was a part of his religion. His highest aspirations and his holiest desires found expression in these forms. They had a value that we can hardly estimate. But when the disciples came into touch with Jesus they found that he performed the same office for them which had been performed by the sacrifices and by the priests. So strong was his faith in the ever-present Father that he introduced others into the presence, and made them feel at home there. He was in their experience a true mediator.

In this sense he was the fulfilment of the legal system, and it was really this which they had in mind when they spoke of him on one hand as the lamb of God who bears the sins of the world, and on the other as their high priest. No doubt the impression of his fulfiling the sacrificial system was deepened by his tragic death. The shedding of blood had always been in some mysterious way essential to communion with God. The self-sacrifice of a hero for the cause of truth must have a higher ethical value than the slaughter of thousands of bulls or of goats. Some underlying con-

sciousness of this must have been in the minds of the disciples — probably they did not stop to reason it out very closely. The fundamental fact was that Jesus accomplished for them more than the whole Old Testament system had done; he brought them near to God. For this reason he was not only the sacrificial lamb, he was also the highpriest in a better temple than the old dispensation could show.

In this sense we see how Jesus may justly be called the fulfilment of the Law. He is claimed also as the fulfilment of the Prophets — the second division of the Hebrew Bible. Here we are on familiar ground, for the argument from prophecy has been a favorite one with the theologians. This argument has lost much of its force since we have learned to estimate these books in a truly historical study. Whereas it used to be thought that the prophets were chiefly concerned with the coming Messiah, that they were supernaturally enlightened as to his birthplace, his nativity, his vicarious suffering and his death, we now see that these, at any rate, were not the mainspring of their preaching. Instead of looking away from the present to a distant future, the prophets were chiefly concerned with their own times, and their message was one of immediate practical benefit to their contemporaries. They were great ethical preachers; they demanded that the men of their own time should cease to do evil

and learn to do well; and all their statements concerning the future were intended to move men in the direction of righteousness. Prediction was, therefore, a quite subordinate part of their mission. But we must recognize that the great theme of their thought and of their preaching was the kingdom of God. They were incurable idealists. They looked and longed for a better day — when crime and oppression should be done away, when men should learn war no more, when the earth should be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Now, being men of their own time, they conceived of this coming kingdom as an exalted and purified kingdom of Israel. It was to be a monarchy, with a descendant of David at its head. But this descendant of David was to be a perfect ruler, endued with wisdom as well as power; one who would administer justice, keep the wicked in check, help the poor and downtrodden. This figure of the Messiah grew in brightness as time went on, for the very reason that the outward circumstances of the people of God became worse. When Jesus came into the world the Jews were hoping and looking for the appearance of this deliverer. It was almost inevitable that the disciples, in endeavoring to give a rational account of the Master who so impressed them, should find in him the long-expected Messiah. Jesus seems not to have respected the identification, but

in applying the conception to himself he transformed it, and made it quite other than it had been.

The dream of faithful Jews had been that their Messiah would come as a great conqueror, would overthrow the Roman world-power. The glories of Solomon would reappear. The riches of the Gentiles would flow to Jerusalem, the Jews themselves would be the chief of the nations, and the others would be their slaves and tributaries. Jesus saw that such a kingdom would be only another worldly kingdom; it would not be the kingdom of God for which he prayed and for which he taught his disciples to pray. The centuries have approved his wisdom. Repeated attempts to make the kingdom of Christ a worldly state, like those of the nations, have ended in failure. It is more and more evident that the kingdom of God must be a spiritual kingdom — the rule of Christ in the hearts of men. In this sense Jesus *fulfilled* the prophetic idea; he took it and transformed it, spiritualized it thereby, elevated it and made it eternal. Instead of fulfilling isolated predictions of individual prophets, he fulfilled the fundamental thought of all prophecy.

The third division of the Hebrew Bible is a miscellaneous collection of books, of which by far the most important is the book of Psalms. This book has become dear to the Christian heart, because it so accurately reflects the experiences of the believing heart. It is a little Bible in itself,

expressing not only the aspirations, sorrows and yearnings of men like ourselves, but also breathing the consolations and encouragements of God Himself. It is not predictive, and we are a little puzzled at the claim that Jesus is its fulfilment. Yet if we look for a single phrase in which to sum up the message of the book, we may perhaps find the fulfilment not very remote. The idea of the Psalter may be expressed in the words *God a personal friend and Saviour*. Its motto might be one of its own verses: "My heart and my flesh fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

These yearnings and this faith were never so completely realized as in Jesus. No one has so constantly lived with God as his friend as did Jesus. For this reason he is the pledge and assurance of God's friendship for ourselves. In him we hear the voice of God inviting us: Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden. In him the disciples felt that the imperfect piety reflected in the Psalms reached perfection. He was to them, therefore, the fulfilment of this part of their Bible, as well as the fulfilment of the other portions. As in the other cases they did not stop to reason it out — they felt it, and it became a part of their lives.

Our study has shown us in the first place why the Old Testament has continued to be a power in the Christian church. This collection of books was not only the Bible of Jesus himself

and of his disciples. It expresses ideas and aspirations which are natural to the human heart. This is true no doubt of other religious literatures. But in none of the other religious books of the world do we find such a variety of expression as in the Bible of the Jews. Besides this, it shows us the organic connection of Christianity with Judaism. The words of Jesus himself apply here — first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. The roots of Christianity are laid bare in the Old Testament. And as we have learned to study things in their origins, the bearing of this on our knowledge of Christianity is obvious.

But with this I am not at present concerned. What we should point out to ourselves is that these ideas, which we find germinally in the Old Testament, are found more or less distinctly in all the earlier religions. Jesus filled up the crude outlines of religion for the Jews, not only, but also for the Gentiles. In fact, the Greeks, who listened to the preaching of Paul, found him speaking in terms which their own religious thinking already knew. This is typical of what has taken place all over the world, and it is the pledge that the religion of Jesus is destined to become the universal religion.

XII
PROMISE AND FULFILMENT

HENRY H. BARBER

PROMISE AND FULFILMENT

"Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."— II PETER iii, 4.

The worth of life is largely in the promise of a better future. Religion is the vision and outlook of a higher good and a larger life. Hope, faith, aspiration, live and grow in the prospect of gains and glories to be achieved or bestowed in days that are surely coming. A power of deliverance from evils, a fulfilment of cherished ideals, a completion of broken lives, an established order of peace and blessing — these things make the vision and onlooking that men ask religion to fulfil.

The Christian gospel met this longing and demand with its message of lofty cheer and infinite hope. At the outset that gospel was the presence among men of an announcing prophet of infinite good will and a more abounding life — a teacher, healer, comforter, inspirer; a benignant fellowman, who diffused gladness by his presence, and made men long for purity and virtue by the life he lived among them. Their hearts burned within them as he told them of a kingdom of heaven that was to be among them; that was, indeed, already in the world in the sonship and

service of the present God to which he called them — a kingdom he and they were to rejoice in and help in, and so to rule in, while he was with them, and even more fully when he went away.

They did not understand it very well, but they felt the divineness of his word and way among them, and some of them joined to make it known as the world's best help and hope. His life with them was the earnest and heritage of the best God had to give or to reveal.

And then he was crucified, and their hopes with him. They had trusted that it was he who should redeem Israel, and he was dead. But all that divine promise could not die. Soon reassurance came. Such a leader and such a cause could not perish. Somehow he was still with them; somehow he would yet lead them as before, only thenceforward with acknowledged right, and in full splendor of human and heavenly witness. So they took heart again, and lived in happy memories and solemn expectation, catching sometimes the higher spirit of his life, as he had said they would when he was gone, doing the greater works and hearing the broader call. They strengthened one another in the hope, and confirmed one another in the life, and bore the witness rejoicing round the world.

But years and generations passed, and still he did not come. And so hope grew faint and far and fading. "Where is the promise of his

Coming?" It was the mockers, this Epistle says, who asked the question. The preachers of the new Way had dwelt much upon the promise, urging it as a main motive to discipleship, a main warning against evil living and unbelief. The disciples had lived in rare gladness and assurance in its conviction. They had been constant under persecution, and even strangely triumphant in the midst of martyr fires. The rulers could not understand it, and the philosophers wondered a little while they despised the spreading superstition. And yet it spread and prospered and gathered strength. "The word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed." Some of the believers had counted much on the fulfilment of the promise — perhaps boasted of their coming triumph.

So the taunt was natural, as it was bitter. "See, your King comes not, as all the world but you knew long ago that he would not come! Your faith is vain, and your preaching also vain. Your absurd talk of melting elements and a renovated world has gone on long enough. Your fathers, who looked for these things, are dead without the sight, and you like them shall die, and all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

So the mockers said. The worst of it was that many among the disciples began to think so too. Lapse of time, disappointed expectation, the pressure of unbelief, more spiritual conceptions, the shifting emphasis of faith to other doctrines,

the practical conditions of their growing life — all these things helped to put into the background in the church itself the old hope and the old terror of the descending angels and the blazing world. Many of the fainthearted no longer expected it, and some among the best no longer cared much about it, if, indeed, they longer believed it. A more spiritual faith, or a more speculative philosophical doctrine was rising in the midst of Christendom.

But the sticklers for the letter still longed and tried to believe, as to this day some such still try and long. It is always a hard time for the literalist when the outward event fails him, or turns out other than he expects. He wants the precise form of his imaged fulfilment, just as your little child wants the very words of his story, as you have often told it, and will suffer no change or correction. So the literalist must have his heavenly city come down bodily from the skies, with blare of trumpets and celestial fireworks, else it is no New Jerusalem for him. "Where is the promise of his Coming?" he sadly echoed; and all the while the cities of the great Roman world were throbbing with the new life of Jesus and his gospel, and the hearts of the very slaves were filled with a new hope and gladness; and multitudes of men in Syria and Asia and Macedonia and Italy were finding a new worth in life, a new trust in death, a new fellowship of privilege, a new citizenship of souls under an everliving

Master of men. "Where indeed the promise?" the literalist Orthodoxy of that day, and of ours, assented and assents; and behold! the kingdom of heaven was growing all about them, as evermore increasingly through all the ages since. "A fading vision and a far fulfilment — far and uncertain," the world said then; and the feebler Christians doubted if it were not so. A fading promise and a far fulfilment, in this steadfast and stubborn world, the world in its wisdom affirms of every highest vision and fairest hope of good to be gained and life to be lifted, and deliverance to be wrought out of man. "You can never abolish slavery, you can never destroy drunkenness or change the drinking habits of society, or establish civil service reform, or atone the industrial warfares of employers and employed, or arbitrate by peaceful methods the international strifes that burden and desolate the nations and outrage every claim to Christian civilization."

And the literalists and dogmatists and shallow believers — the Demases and Faint-hearts and Ready-to-halts, accept the easy wisdom of the mocking world, when the vision is delayed, or is fulfilled without portent or audible voice from heaven. And it always is delayed, or without observation comes to full reality. The world is right with such rightness always. They were wrong, no doubt, those credulous early Christians; with their dream of a visible kingdom of

the saints, a return and reign of the glorified Christ over the subdued and vanquished princedoms among which he had lived and suffered. Criticism holds them to have been misjudging; history proves them mistaken.

Yes; they were misjudging, as Columbus was misjudging when he set forth to find the Indies in the West, and discovered a new continent; they were mistaken as Saul was mistaken when he set forth to find his father's asses and found a kingdom. The form of the vision changed and passed, as all fixed forms of earthly events and glories do or may. But the heart of that vision was alive, expanding, possessing itself of the heart of the world. It burst out even then into great faiths and fellowships and charities, which even then — and how much more until this day! — worked on to bless and transform the life of the world, as no renewing flames, or cloud-throned prince, or solid, four-square city, let down from heaven, could, or can.

A fading vision and a far fulfilment? Yes; but fading always into fuller day, and fulfilled in the spirit of a larger hope and the power of an endless life. As always, to the brave hoper and the earnest worker, coming as he works, coming as he waits, with hidden surprises opening within his life and all around him, with unseen growth of thought, with new aspirations, new convictions, new fellowships, new institutions, re-

newing or replacing, and always enlarging, ennobling, crowning the old. From an outward coming to an inward, inspiring presence, from a cosmic catastrophe to a resistless energy of universal good, from a rule over men in the majesty of earthly splendors to a rule in men of love and joy and peace in a holy spirit, from fire-cleansed lands and scroll-wrapt skies to the new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells and grows to ever-enlarging fulness.

So the vision deepens and brightens and extends and comes to growing realization, while the world sneers its speedy dismissal to oblivion, and the fearful disciples are waiting for a sign!

So it was with the early Christian promise, and so it has been with every higher form of Christian faith, and every new and better application of its temper and spirit to human life. The cherished vision of coming good finds continual increasing fulfilment. The record we have brought from the early scenes of Christian struggle and conquest is at once the great instance and the supreme parable of human hope and hope's divine fulfillments. Fading vision, growing substance of truth and power; failing fulfilment of outward promise, gaining realization of things not fully seen — that is the witness, that the normal order of all true living, that the spring and cheer of all high faith. Vision is lost in reality, anticipation pales before advancing attainment,—

"And drowns the dream
In larger stream,
As morning drinks the morning star."

This is most clearly seen, no doubt, in the ranges of our material and industrial life. Inventions, discoveries, applied science and skill make all expectation feeble in the rapid progress and marvelous achievements of industrial art. We see in the dark, and look through the walls of our houses and the very tissues of our bodies. So we may read a new meaning into the Psalmist's song: "Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day. The darkness and the light are both alike to thee." We stand amidst the roaring wheels of a great factory in a nearby city, or ride along the streets; and try to realize that Niagara has lent a portion of its flashing fall to weave our fabrics and speed our journeys; and we chant with a new awe the ancient strain: "For thou hast made him a little lower than God, and hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands." Or we catch the pulses of the electric waves, far-sent over sea and land, and read the messages of gladness or distress from invisible cords stretched from the foundations of the world; and beyond all possible conception of their author we feel the truth and beauty of the wonderful words: "Their line is gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world." Soon, as we ride the winds securely, we shall find new meaning and divineness

in the great Psalm of the present and sustaining God. "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand shall hold me!"

These are but instances, that may be paralleled in various lines of scientific and industrial progress, to show that all promise and prophecy are transcended in the actual attainment of to-day. But it will be said that all this is but a single and subordinate realm of human life, that its nobility and security consist not in these things — much less, the promise and coming of the kingdom of heaven. And this is very true. Happiness and character as the foundation of happiness depend very little on the bushels of wheat exported, the miles per hour we travel, the speed of spindles and printing presses. The historian, Froude, repeats the wisdom of all prophets and sages when he warns us that the essential conditions of a people's security and permanence are the few and fixed elements of its moral soundness and moral enterprise.

And here it is that the doubters and cynics put in their demurrers. "Society is as bad as ever; our free institutions are but opportunities for greed and recklessness, and the paradise of shiftless tramps. The old oppressions have but changed their forms, while losing nothing of their burdens; even the freer, humaner faith we have cherished is fading into indifference, doubt, and

moral carelessness, while the multitudes that seek the old altars are growing; the churches of dogma and authority and the new fanaticisms and superstitions overtop and put in a corner the higher Christianity that we had hoped was coming to brighten and redeem the world. Where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were?"

Here again, we need to own all the truth the doubters have for their dismal outlook. It is most true that widening opportunity does not always mean enlarging character. Universal schooling does not always insure general wisdom, nor broadening culture make certain the lift of noble ideals. Multiplying machinery and its products have not banished poverty; democracy does not compel the dominance of wise statesmanship, nor the largest religious liberty always inspire the highest ideals of spiritual life and service. It is quite possible for a community to make the shameful choice of a stagnant content, or of fruitless strifes about party watchwords, while the way is wide before it to better social methods and a more benign civilization. Then, there is the dry rot of growing luxury and privileged idleness. It is the saddest sight we are called to witness, that of young men and women of splendid opportunities, who are unmoved by all high voices of the heroic past, and the summons of youthful aspiration and human need, and who pour out the precious treasures of their strength

in the debasing worship of ignoble pleasures, unmindful and purposeless in this land and time of largest opportunity — listless idlers and epicures at God's great banquet of life!

But I recall to myself and you that this complaint itself is the product of the world's advancing life. The height of the Christian ideal makes the abyss in which the sins and failures of men and of peoples are seen, and by contrast judged. These are so sad and shameful because that ideal is so lofty and so fair; because, too, it has so often been approached and illustrated, so far attempted and attained by earnest men and women. The promise of the first Christian age is illuminated and confirmed by two thousand years of progressive fulfilment. In the long perspective, despair, discouragement, is seen to be absurd. Even the doubters and the mockers see that all things do not continue as they were from the beginning. Amidst all failures and backward swirls of old materialisms, cruelties, warfares, " the steady gain of man " is still assured.

Summon history, study customs, laws, homes, governments, institutions. Study, if you will, the social discontents, the industrial conflicts, the political scandals, the recurrent medievalisms of our times in states and churches. You shall find at the heart of all these things, and in the way they appeal to the sympathies and the criticisms of society, and to the moral judgments of mankind, elements that mark and make a far advance

in the life and lot of men. "The old shames and slaveries are as galling and as hopeless as ever?" As galling, yes; but not as hopeless, save as status must always be below the advancing ideal. When I see the homes of the thrifty working-people of this country, the wise provision for universal and higher education — even the beginnings of ample industrial education; when I remember the vast shelter furnished to weakness and misfortune, and the increasing numbers who are studying and serving in the various warfare with human need; nay, even when I see the growing power of discontented labor to hold long and sometimes winning contests with combined capital, I cannot doubt the immense bettering of the lot of most, and the increasing shelter of all in the protective clasp of a civilization that is growing humane in the growing perception of the Christian estimate of man. So much, at least, is proved by the social unrest and heated conflicts of the times. It is the new recognition of brotherhood compelled by a deepening sense of the social worth of justice and humanity. Privilege is coming to understand its responsibilities. Economics is seen to have a moral and human basis. Here and there one is gaining adequate perception of the Christian meaning of the splendid stewardship of wealth. Legislation for party gains or corporate advantage is slowly shifting to regard for the common good. In the unfolding life of Christendom the heart is evolving eyes to see and hands to help the

struggling life of the toilers and depressed classes. The longing and the purpose are at once the growing promise and fulfilment.

So of business and social methods, and so of the standards of intercourse among peoples and states. However the practice may shame the fair ideal, the claim is ever more strongly urged for justice and human well-being. Even the monopolies that crush, the anarchisms of law-defying privilege, the policies that blot out weaker peoples in blood, find defense in claims of fulfilling larger human interests. Even the hypocrisies of the time witness to the growth of the higher ideals.

And what shall we say of the religious doubters and despairers? Here we come to the central questions of our theme. Here, where the main issues of life are, they grow very serious, and come home to individual character and the real values in every life. Let us admit, as wholly true, the charge of frequent indifference, ineffectiveness and disloyalty of those on whom are laid the primal obligations of higher faith, and the witness for the larger Christian truth and service.

But however we fail, the promise does not fail. The juster, humaner, more rational, more spiritual conceptions in religion are taking possession of the mind and heart of the world. Look abroad, and see. One after another, the citadels of Orthodoxy are yielding to the diffused potency of a humane and genial faith. Half a

score of its leading representatives in the last few years have put forth books in hearty accord with the word of Channing emphasizing the worth of man and the parental character of the Divine rule. Eminent Congregational preachers are setting forth most of the heresies for which their fathers cut off the Unitarians less than a century ago. Pulpits in this city, and in every city, are urging the convictions which when first heard in this church were a John the Baptist crying in the wilderness of a harsh and arid Orthodoxy. Your truth and my truth — better, the enlarging and victorious truth of God — is having free course, and being glorified more and more.

Where is the promise of its coming? Hear the great preachers of every name. Read the great religious journals, the great religious books, the greater religious novelists and poets. See the growing practical and humane activities in all the churches, the better spirit of missions, the larger interest in science, education, philanthropy, reforms. The old shibboleths are largely shelved, in the zeal to affirm the new-old watchwords of our familiar faith. The promise is to you, and to your children, and to all who have been far off, but are hearing now the diviner call. Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven in waiting doubt, while the great Coming shines from every quarter under heaven, and asks your welcome and your work?

So everywhere the promise brightens from the Infinite Promise-keeper, melting through every glooming shadow of discouragement and seeming defeat. Even they who have failed, who have mocked, who have denied, are caught up at last in the sweep of the great fulfilment! Life longs always for larger good, since life is itself divine. Religion lives in the promise of a Prevailing Goodness; Christianity is the announcing of an Infinite Fulfilment.

> It fortifies my soul to know
> That though I perish, Truth is so;
> That, howsoe'er I roam or range,
> Although I stray, Thou dost not change;
> I steadier step when I recall
> That though I slip, Thou dost not fall.

And not only for cheer to baffled, disappointed, sorrowful men and women is the lesson read. The cheerful workers, the patient waiters, the joyous hopers, the expectant venturers on untried larger ways, need, too, the inspiring brightness and the confirming strength of this divine assurance of fulfilment. And it does not fail. Bring hither the believers in the promise, and hear their witness. Summon the glorious company of its apostles, the goodly fellowship of its prophets, the noble army of its martyrs. Paul, did the Damascus vision fail in illusion, and the promise of the sufficing grace fade into unreality? Does the earnest expectation of the

creation wait in vain for the manifestation? Hear his answer: "All things are yours; whether the world, or life or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours." Peter, did the voice from the excellent glory call you down from the holy mount only to disappoint your hope that the "exceeding great and precious promises should be fulfilled to measure of your hope?" Nay, "his divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness," in making us to be "partakers of the divine nature"; and so this is the day of the Lord, wherein according to His promise we look for new heavens and a new earth in which His more perfect righteousness shall be revealed. The great workers are the divine hopers.

Call now the humble sharers of the Promise, of all lands and times. They are not disappointed though they are still expectant. The divine vision has not been fulfilled to the letter of their hope, else it had not been divine. But the light is on their faces, the joy of noble striving beams in their eyes, the peace of achieved victory is in their hearts. "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall cause them to stumble." For themselves, they have found the Great Fulfilment, and so for the world their hearts cherish and repeat its promise.

No, baffled struggler with the doubts and the illusions of evil, the temptations and hindrances that delay and perplex your way in the better

life you would live, the higher choices you would make, the larger work you would accomplish, the promise does not fail! No, sad and shadowed spirits, lifting beyond the fading earthly prospect and the gathering darkness, your longing and trust to the heavenly Promise-keeper. As your day, so your strength shall be; for in your weakness the Everlasting Arms are still beneath you! No, patient reformer, helper of men, hoper for the better days of justice and peace, worker until the day dawn, and the Day-star rise with healing in his beams, the lessons of experience confirm and actualize the heart of all high prophecies, the eternal prophecy of the soul of man — the ever-coming kingdom of the Prince of Peace, in the growing brotherhood of nations and of men.

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways."

The bettering prospect of the actual still nears and brightens in the cherished vision and service of the ideal.

XIII

THE INVISIBLE HUMANITY OF GOD

FRANK C. DOAN

THE INVISIBLE HUMANITY OF GOD

I

As the theme of our evening's meditation, I have chosen to consider with you the romance of God's invisible humanity, the motion of His unseen spirit on-pressing in the souls of men. This experience of God can be measured only by the instrument of meditation: *Silence* must underly and master the words with which we shall seek to sound this invisible humanity I call God. The persistent presence of divinity in the race of men! From the first man with his vision of his own invisibly divine image in burning bush and flaming star to the last man with his grasp of God's human spirit regnant and watchful over the star-strewn heavens and the men-strewn earth — how consciously, patiently, triumphantly has God's spirit pressed in upon the opening souls of men! *God is.* The invisible spirit of all humanity, God is! I know not what may be in the infinite reaches of unvisited space and untranspired time. I only know that by some commanding passion of his expanseless being, by some tender impulse of his placeless soul a God has come to earth to dwell within men. He has come to dwell evermore in the lives of men, making his own their trials and errors, their successes and joys, their goodness and loving kindness. There is some strange, imperative persuasiveness

in this faith that men of all times and climes have kept in the living presence of God's image in their souls. It is a direct perception of faith which only a suicidal scepticism has ever defeated. As men's sense of the brutal energy round about them has grown, their spirits have but gained just so much in trustful confidence: this majestic God of the heavens by the *virtue* of his very power is all the more reliably concerned for their life, all the more joyful in the times of their gladness, the more sad in the hours of their sorrow, the more tenderly forgiving in the places of their sin, the more patient in the days of their weakness and unfaithfulness.

II

What matters it then that the earliest concern of the divine life was with the blind organizing of the great universe round about men? I dare say the human passions and purposes of the universal life lay for countless ages concealed and dormant within creation's soul. But *now!* Who can contemplate the drama of the divine life in the enlarging souls of men and yet miss the vision of a creative life all revealed and all a-quiver with human power? Why, the faith of men alone in their own eternal value, their vision of themselves under the form of an endless divinity must have drawn a response from the all-feeling spirit: the universal life cannot have missed these throbs of divinity outpouring from

the newborn souls of men. How hardly could the great drama of divine faith have enacted itself in this world-home of men, had not the impulses of men's righteousness and love become at once the deepest concern in the heart and being of God Himself! Every act of human righteousness, each impulse of human tenderness and affection in the world-homes of men are intimations of an unspeakable harmony aimed at hour by hour, world by world, by the heart and being of the universal life of humanity, the God of mankind. Human temptations, trials, sins are but signs of a passionate life eternally present yet everlastingly mastered in the divine being, the invisible Father-spirit of men.

What if it were not even so? Suppose this drama of the divine in human life were, as some of the positivists would have us believe, enacting itself on a human stage alone; that this on-pushing human life were all there is of divinity in the world-life? Would not this divinity triumph none the less? Would it not grow silently, and magically extend its sobering, transforming passion of divine life to all men in all generations? Would not men under the pressure of the divinity within acquit themselves as responsible and infallible gods? Nay, would not this perfect passion of the human gods transpierce, chasten and soften the very energies of the heavens? The complaint of the positivist is that men have relied too much upon the God of their magic and super-

stition. Meanwhile the pathetic fallacy of positivism is that in its turn it relies too little upon the Man of its humanitarian vision. In him is the very quintessence of divine energy and passion. His belief in the regnancy over all things of righteousness and love is inviolable. No creature is so frail or debased, and no creature so monstrous as not to respond to the touch of unaffected goodness, faithfulness and purity in the world. A single pin-point of divinity, a solitary impulse of natural love in any place or time of the world's being must infallibly master with its divine control all the awful and terrifying powers of the universal life, bringing all heavens and all men within the light and strength of its constant life.

Just so, I believe, the divine life has kept pace with the life within our human souls, inviting, guiding and furthering all our essays in divinity. Of every enlargement of the spirits of men, of every deepening experience in which the race of men has come into a profounder sense of God's presence and into a surer and more intimate communion with his world-old life — we may rest assured that the great spirit of God deep down in the souls of men and far out on the horizon of the world's vast being, the great heart of God has known; his invisible spirit has felt and has poured in its answering life and love. Ah, this unseen, incomparable humanity of God! How silently and patiently it throbs out its life in this

world-home of men. That is God alive! — the God who has lived and grown in all humanity, the God who lives and grows in you and in me this night and eternally, the great Companion of our hours of world-loneliness, the great Physician of our nights of soul-sickness, the great God of our souls.

When will men cease measuring God in cubits? When will we cease esteeming the divine life by the sheer heights and abysses of the world's being? When will men cease worshipping "His Majesty"? When shall we escape this last form of idolatry, this worshipping of a telescopic image of the unknown God? Then, shall we awaken and arise to the true depth and tenderness of God's invisible being.

III

There is only one tragedy in life from which the human soul seems unable to recover, only one derangement of life's natural harmony so fearsome that the broken spirit deliberates longingly upon death eternal. It is the frightful loneliness of the soul that has lost faith in the companioning love of the divine life and sees only blindness and cruelty in the heart of the surrounding world-life. Facing this fearful vision of an untrustworthy universal life that sets it about, the human soul finds the very majesty that once commanded its confidence an instrument of torment: calamity impends; one blow, and this

human life is staggering under an intolerable weight of sorrow and soul-death.

One night my path crossed that of a lonely woman of the world. I learned that on that very night she harboured in her soul a longing to express her life in a way of sin. Her life cried out against this desecration of her childhood's innocency and sweet chastity. Yet she would offer all upon the altar of her generous human love. As one whose life is defeated save for its poor, human pulse-beats she told me that her soul would no longer pray. She believed in God; yes, and trembled. The Great Father was dead and her own soul had burned itself on his pyre until death. There seemed to her henceforth more of companionship and tenderness in the life of sinful affection she contemplated than in the whole being of him she called God, the distant Creator of her ancestral traditions. As I turned silently and solemnly away leaving her there in the night, a solitary figure, type of all the lonely, wandering souls in this great world, I knew she was beyond my human help, lost to the arguments of *men*. I knew that only the infinitely human, patient and hopeful spirit of God could ever recall her soul to his great world-home.

Some years later I crossed the path of another spirit driven to the verge of madness by this same loss of faith in the humane presence of God. She was alone and friendless in the world.

In her loneliness of spirit she sought the companionship of God but could not find him. A woman of refinement with no impulses to temporary sin she was able by her culture to find in God all the qualities of divinity save just this one note of infinite humanity. Power, majesty, law, righteousness — all these she acknowledged as belonging in the world being; but in all these she found no response to her trembling, human needs, no real presence to companion her in the lonely struggles of her wakeful night-watches. For long she had been desperately struggling against the impulse to give up her search for the divine companionship and to end her life in a last, violent protest against the lovelessness of the circumpressing power she called God.

The exquisite pain of utter soul-loneliness, when all forms, human and divine, appear as they were phantasmal and unreal! What wonder that the broken soul seeks relief in the painlessness of endless death? It is the tragedy of a soul that has lost for a while humanity's age-long vision of God's own mystic humanity. Is it strange that the tearing away from a human spirit of the silent soul of its humanity, the painfully accumulated belief of all human ages in God's surpassing humanity should so lacerate and maim that soul that in death it seeks release from the horrible aching at its broken heart? It is as if the very soul of humanity had met a sudden and tragic death, as if the whole soul of God had

passed out of this world-home of our human life.

IV

But there is in all this a divine compensation. The loss of faith in God's regnant humanity may torture a soul beyond all human endurance. And yet passing thus through this valley of soul-death the human spirit, sooner or later, now or then, will emerge into the sunlight of God's invisible presence — a presence solemnized and brightened in infinite degree by the vision of the soul's black death. Just so, this faith in God's full humanity may in the very hour of deadly darkness enter the life of a man and burn in upon him a mark of divinity so tender and sensitive that no calamity, whether of death or of life, can estrange him from God's endless humanities. His soul has been touched with a live fire from the altar of God's eternal humanity.

All other ways to God are blind, formal, unconceiving except this way of mystic, practical confidence in the spaceless, timeless value of human life. God may by external marks reveal the whole body of his divinity and yet his invisibly human soul remain unseen. It is this unseen grace of infinite patience, hopefulness and human understanding, transforming all God's visible, physical energies, that sets him at once beyond the range of our physical imagination and yet within the range of our divinely human needs. The divine energy of God's invisible hu-

manity pours through and beyond us as we come and go upon our human errands of mercy and pity. The divine sorrow, deep yet comprehending beyond the limits of our poor human vision presses in upon our human souls until round about is the perfect peacefulness of the divine companionship. This infinite humanity of God is not to be proved or measured. His divine humanity must be touched directly, heart to heart, spirit to spirit. We must let our human life with its faltering courage, nobility and love be filled straightway and abundantly from the divine life with its world-wide courage, its world-old nobility and love.

By no other way can a man arrive at a conviction of God which might not at the very next turn in his human life be shaken by one of life's mysterious calamities. A thousand cases of real life are at hand in every plague-spotted city in the world to show you that your dainty demonstration of God blinks the facts. God alive appears only to him whose search begins and ends in a pure and brave humanity. Let the purity and heroism disappear from a man's belief in God and he will find himself stolidly worshipping the wooden deity of a schoolman. As there is only one kind of godlessness, so there is only one kind of godliness. The godless man is he who, knowing God by all the clever tricks of the schoolman's trade, no longer keeps faith with the righteous humanity of God. The godly man is

he who without the conceit of knowledge yet has kept faith with men, has played the divine game of the humanities honorably, tirelessly, unwhimperingly, and who gladly risks his eternal life upon the belief that righteousness and love are at the heart of things in this world. For insensibly this man with his boundless human vision comes to practice God's invisible humanity, and in practicing this human divinity he learns that the infinite energy of a schoolman's demonstrated God is one in substance and in spirit with the divine energy that preoccupies all men's meditations and leads them in the way of humanity.

V

Even so the race of men has learned to risk its unseen future upon the belief that its age-long vision of an ideal humanity is but the vision of the deepest, intensest and noblest passions in the very soul of God. I sometimes glimpse this vision of humanity's God alive as it appears in the midst of the grey cloud of magic and superstition obscuring its gracious features. It is a vision of a Man of almightiness and deep wisdom, a Man with soul-sinews like brass and iron, his form and features all marred and scarred by the battles of life, his person all quivering and sensitive with the pain and suffering and sorrows of life. A nobleman he is with power and wisdom checked and controlled in a perfect, constant patience and love. In his everlasting arms he bears

and protects a little child. His great strength is held and guarded lest by some accident of his very power he should injure and crush this precious offspring of his love. His great wisdom is bowed down to the level of the simple prattle of the child-life he is bearing, his great body a-tremble with the joy of the responsive caresses with which the child expresses its perfect trust in his great being, its perfect independence upon his great heart. With infinite gentleness and tender firmness he controls and guides the little soul struggling and throbbing in his restraining, encircling arms. And as this vision of the divine Man grows clearer and clearer in the long course of human history, as his features becoming more and more majestic and world-wide finally disappear in the invisible depths of time and space I know that this divine Man is God. And the little child is Humanity.

XIV

THE SERVILE LIFE AND THE FILIAL LIFE

CLAYTON R. BOWEN

THE SERVILE LIFE AND THE FILIAL LIFE

"Not under law, but under grace."— ROMANS vi, 14.

Were I a clergyman of a generation ago, I should probably have entitled this sermon "The Pauline Antinomy 'Law and Grace' as a Theological Concept," and should thereby have raised an effective barrier to your understanding of what I wished to say. The phrase I have quoted as a text is a well known element in what is known as "the Pauline theology." Like many of the theological phrases of the New Testament, we see it with our eyes and hear it with our ears, while failing, in any real sense, to understand it with our hearts, still less to respond to it in the attitude and disposition of our lives. Revivalists used to complain of certain people who were "gospel-hardened," who had heard gospel preaching so much that they had grown impervious, entirely immune, to its proper effects. The same thing is true of most of us, I think, in regard to a great many of the words and phrases of our religious vocabulary; words and phrases really full of meaning and power, which would burst upon us with illumination and inspiration could we hear them for the first time, or in some way

be impressed by their real meaning instead of by their sound alone.

Talleyrand is credited with defining language as a clever device for concealing thought, and the definition holds true of many of our oldest and best words. Words often become like shells or boxes, in which the original meaning lies hidden away beyond our seeing and knowing. The shell is hard and lifeless — the heart of it, could we come upon it direct, bare to our sight and touch, would be sweet and tender and palpitating with undreamed vitality. To use a figure more literally applicable, most of our words are pictures, that have become dull and faded with age. Wipe away the obscuring dust of familiarity and custom, and the commonest word of our homeliest speech will often reveal unsuspected color and form. How lightly do we say *church;* it is literally: the Master's House. *Minister* is: the servant in the house; *priests* are originally the older men of the congregation; *pastor* is a shepherd of the sheep. When such words were first used in the church's life, fresh, vital, untechnical, that life itself was fresher, more simple, more direct and real. Men talked simply and naturally of the things nearest their hearts, or they wrote as they were moved by various necessity, in joy or in sorrow, to rebuke or encourage or explain. For us their living, plastic words have grown dry and formal, have become *terms*, and we unconsciously read them as if they were meant thus.

If we could only feel the depth of spiritual fervor that trembled in the voice of Jesus as he spoke the words which we have codified into "the Sermon on the Mount"— sermon is too formal a word — or if we could perceive the tears of anguish, the tremblings of indignation, the passion for righteousness, the love for his people, which are part and parcel of every one of Paul's letters, we should have, not a New Testament, but a bundle of human documents as real and moving as any letters we keep laid away in a safe and sacred place.

But inevitably, necessarily, we do not feel the original force of these ancient utterances. It is no one's fault save Time's. And so theology is somewhat in disrepute in our day; men feel as if its phrases were formal and meaningless, as if the things it is concerned with were unrelated to the realities of everyday life. It is all very well, we say, for clergymen or theologians to talk about law and grace, or to dispute over justification by faith; the man in the pew (or out of it) has no understanding or interest for these things. Religion, we like to declare, is our concern, not theology. We can be religious and know nothing about theology; indeed, emphasis on theology often goes with irreligion and bigotry.

This contention is, of course, true; religion is our prime concern, and yet no man can be religious without some theology. What does the

word *theology* mean? It is simply: man's word about God, or even: man's thought about God. Your religion is your relationship to God. You cannot have any conscious relationship with God unless you think about Him, have some ideas about Him. And those ideas, unexpressed or put into words, phrased in a creed or written in books, are your theology. You may have a worse theology or a better, but you cannot be in any degree religious and have no theology.

It is, indeed, a truism that very much theological speculation and discussion has been unreal and fruitless; thousands of theological books are today like tares fit only for the burning. The Jewish rabbis used to discuss learnedly the right and wrong of eating eggs laid on the Sabbath; Christian scholars have disputed zealously about angels and devils and the last secrets of the mind of God. Yet all the absurdities do not make a theology any the less necessary for each one of us, nor take an atom of force from the great words and phrases of those men of old who were really thinking about God for us all, and recording for our help the highest and wisest thoughts which came to them. The theology of the New Testament is not merely a doctrinal course in the curriculum of a divinity school; it is the answer of some of the supremest spiritual seers of all the ages to our reverent yet insistent question: What did you think about God? We dare to hope that, as ministers of religion, our thoughts of

God are to be worth the uttering, as a spiritual service to men. Any true man's thought of God is worth his brother's hearing. Surely, the world can ill afford not to hear, in clear and certain tone what Jesus thought of God, what Paul of Tarsus thought, what thought the great unknown whom tradition names John. These were men who had experience of God, and knew whereof they spoke; they were men who had experience of human life in most diverse phases, and knew what human life might be when transfigured by the thought of God. That thought was for them indeed "equal to their every need," and their utterances never give expression to it as a mere thought, a speculative construction of the mind, but always as applied to their diverse needs, as shaping and invigorating and exalting human life.

This is true to a marvellous degree even of Paul, who is called the most distinctively theological of New Testament writers. The fact is often noted and commented on, that most of the New Testament phrases which have become theological terms come from Paul. Very few such phrases are found on the lips of Jesus; very few proof texts are taken from his words. There is a very real difference between the two men, Paul the trained thinker, Jesus without education, but living in direct intuitive experience of the Father. Jesus' utterances are never philosophical, but always personal; they are never reasoned out, but

declared with immediate authority out of a pure heart that *saw* God. He did not set himself the task of creating a system of thought, or of answering all the questions that arise about divine things. He pleaded for the dominance in men's hearts and minds and souls of the Thought of God — and all these things should then be added. If we ask for Jesus' system of theology, we shall find that he shared in substance that of his hearers. The best thought of his people about God he took for granted, and his discourses mainly concern themselves with how to live. If we wish to preserve the distinction, they are utterances of religion rather than of theology. For this reason, not only because Jesus was the greater spiritual genius, his teachings are more sympathetic to the modern unread man than are those of Paul.

But Paul must not be misapprehended. Entering with marvelous understanding into the religion of Jesus, he saw that the principles implicit in that religion demanded a new kind of theology. A new vision of God in the seer translates itself into a new thought of God in the thinker. The old Jewish theology is no adequate bottle for the new wine. It has a radical defect in its conception of the practical relationship between God and man. That relationship Paul reconceives; he remains a loyal Jew, but a Jew with a difference. Christianity, as we know it, needed the formative influence of his theology as well as of

Jesus' religion. Paul, indeed, never dreamed that his thoughts would be appealed to as a collection of doctrines, or his letters regarded as a storehouse of raw material for creeds. For example, when he sat down after a hard day's work, perhaps after having only just escaped with his life from a Jewish riot, and wrote to the people in Galatia or in Rome about justification by faith, it was no abstract point of doctrine he was discussing, but an intensely real matter, that concerned the happiness and religious well-being of every man among them. It was a far more vital and practical matter than the church discipline or church finance with which a pastor's letter to-day may be occupied.

Men were justified by faith, not by works, Paul told them. What did he mean? It is quite simple. The one thing all these men and women wanted was justification with God, that is, to be such men and women as God would call just, good, as would meet with His favor. It is precisely what you and I crave to-day. And all their lives those of their number who were born Jews had been trying to gain this good name with God by observing the Ten Commandments and all the other precepts and rules we may read in the early books of the Old Testament. And they had failed. In the first place, they could not keep all the rules, as you and I would soon see if we should try it. And in the second place, when a man of quick and tender conscience and

deep spiritual sensibility, like Paul himself, did succeed in keeping the laws with a certain degree of exactness, he did not find within his heart the divine witness he had labored to attain. Rather did the voice within his soul declare with solemn power, "*One thing thou lackest*," yet the name and nature of that one thing was not revealed. "Wretched man that I am!" is the despairing, disappointed cry of a man who has *kept* the law, and as touching its righteousness is found blameless. And yet the Jewish theology taught: Keep the rules and be right with God.

Those, again, who had not been born Jews, perhaps had not been religious at all before they were drawn to Christianity, looked at first to the new faith for some body of precepts. Give us the list of things God wants us to do, and so, doing them, we shall gain His favor and the inward peace we are craving. To all of them alike Paul spoke the great releasing words: there is no such list. The whole principle of getting justified by keeping rules is wrong. Keeping the Jewish law or any other set of laws cannot make you God's man. A man is justified by faith, and not by works of law. And what is faith? Do not make the mistake of thinking that faith means, for Paul, believing something. It means being something different, living according to another principle, in a word, becoming a child instead of a servant. The life according to law and rule is really a servant's life; the master or-

ders his slaves to do this and that as he will, for them every act and duty is prescribed, and they obey each command because they are — slaves. The son of the house in his walk and conversation is as well pleasing to the father as are the servants, nay, much more so; his behaviour conforms to the father's will as closely as does theirs; but not because he is living under a code of orders as they are. He lives the life the father desires because it is natural for him so to do, because he loves the father and desires what the father desires, because he is of the father's kind, in short, because he is — a son.

That is the illustration Paul uses. The mistake you Jews and the rest of you have been making, he says, is in regarding yourselves as servants, is in living on the code-of-rules principle. Give that all up; it is all a mistake. You are sons: live as the son would live. Try that kind of life, and you will find yourselves becoming what you would be, *just* in the sight of God. That is faith, just daring to think of yourselves as sons, daring to drop the rules and live as sons. You will find yourselves as good as ever you succeeded in being on the old principle; nay, the new attitude will give you new incentive and new power to live far nearer to the ideal of the Father's will than was ever possible for you before.

Paul often connects this faith with the name of Jesus. That means simply this. Jesus was

for Paul the Son of God in a special sense, which, whatever it meant on the Godward side, on the manward side meant that Jesus knew the right principle of life. By his example he showed it to other men, and inspired them to try it for themselves. Conscious always that he was a son, not a servant, he lived so confidently and bravely, so sweetly and affectionately, the son's life. That's the kind of life I mean, says Paul; Jesus' life is the thing, a perfect example of what God wants. Faith in Christ — what is that but believing in that sort of life, not as an isolated phenomenon seen in Jesus only, but believing in it as what God wants of you, and has made possible for you? The life of Jesus is your manifest destiny written clear, full of stimulus and appeal. Put on that life; make the venture; drop the old life and assume this, and your justification is assured. You are what God wants you to be.

That is all simple and clear enough, even practical enough, is it not? And that is just what Paul says in his letters, in different words indeed, but in words which were as simple and clear to those he addressed, as our words are to us. That is Paul's theology, or a part of it. Christianity is a new way of living. And this explains our text: not under law, but under grace. Grace is another "theological term"; Paul meant by it just kindness, good will, favor. You are not slaves under a rigid discipline; you are children

basking in the sunshine of a father's kindness. If you will but take yourself at this valuation, and turn to Him in love and trust, God justifies you freely; He accounts you His man; your former mistakes and sins He forgives and forgets; all is well between you and Him.

And how have you gained that rich blessing of perfect adjustment with God? Did you earn it by keeping a set of rules in which He expressed His will for you? Is it yours by right, as a payment which you may justly claim, a debt due to you from God, for value received? By no means. No one knows better than yourself that you have broken most of the laws of God, instead of observing them every one; no one knows better that if you had to *earn* your justification you would never get it. The best of men fail somewhere in keeping the laws, how much more you with all your weakness and wilfulness! No, this is no debt God owes you, no reward you claim as your just due; your just due would be something far different. No, it is just pure kindness on God's part, pure goodness, pure love. You are not under law, thank God, but under grace; not under rule, but under love. God never exacts of any man the entire keeping of all the laws and precepts; that would be to make slaves of men. By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified, nor did God ever mean justification to come so. The law is not to make you just, but only to guide you and keep you within

bounds until you awake to your true position, enter into your true heritage. "A pedagogue to lead us to Christ," Paul calls the law; the pedagogue was the slave who led the child to school, and Christ is the representative of the kind of life we are meant to assume, the life of free sons and daughters in the Father's house, heirs of all that is His.

We were born sons and daughters all, but we forgot our parentage, we sold our birthright, we assumed the status of slaves, and set ourselves to please the Father by conformity to rules of *shalt* and *shalt not*. That was a wrong to God as well as to our own souls, for it degraded Him into a taskmaster, and offered Him obedience when He asked for love. And all the while our true station is waiting for our return; the old place at the fireside, the old loving intimacy, to be ours if we will but assume it. We cannot earn it, we cannot buy it, we cannot truly deserve it; but the Father's goodness, grace, makes it ours on the mere condition that we take it, that we assume our rightful station, that we drop the servile relation and put on sonship. That is to be justified by faith, that is to be under grace instead of under law. That is the heart of what Paul meant by Christianity; the discovery and impartation of this new principle of life is what Jesus had done for men, and so earned his supremacy as spiritual friend and helper of the race.

I fail to see how we can conceive Jesus and Christianity otherwise. There are two kinds of life, the servile and the filial, and our religion has meant the filial life. I do not forget that at certain times the Christian church has fallen into as abject formalism as did the Jewish church at its worst. I know that the Roman Catholic Church has in certain past centuries made the Christian religion to consist practically in the observance of a host of forms and rules, while the heart and life might be infinitely removed from any harmony with God. I know the legalism that has characterized certain Protestant sects, and which may still be met with here and there in many communions. But these are defections from Christianity; they are the direct nullification of its central and original principle, and they have always called out the protest of the truest Christians in each communion, who insisted on the restatement of the gospel. So St. Francis in the thirteenth century, so Erasmus in the sixteenth, each in his way went back to Jesus and the original force of his message, and so did a needed service to the great Roman Church. In modern times there is an ever-increasing number who are alive to the true ideal of life committed to the church, and insist that she be loyal to her mission. There is need of watchfulness, there is need of care. Not only the church, but each of us as an individual, is always in danger of slipping back into the servile relation, of regulating

his life by some code of laws which we may borrow from an ecclesiastical or social tradition, or may, perhaps, make for ourselves. It is easy to conceive Christianity as a new law, superseding the old. But it is not a law at all; it frees us from law.

We hear in these days much of anarchists, and we popularly picture them as long-haired fanatics who, with bombs and knives, set themselves to the assassination of rulers and the overthrow of governments. But we are told also of a more ideal sort of anarchists, those who believe that man should be his own law, that we should live together as free and equal brethren, in mutual good-will and service, under no compulsion save that of our purified hearts. That ideal anarchistic society can find realization only when we have men and women with purified hearts to make up society. Meantime we recognize the need of law and government, as pedagogues to guide us to the freedom which is possible only for those who have reached absolute self-mastery.

When a great preacher was asked whether Christianity were not a failure, he replied, "It has never been tried." The world has not tried it; no large body of persons has put its central principle into practical application; no one of us has dared to live fully, freely, as a child of God, at home in God's world, heir to all the divine riches, bound by no law save the law of our heart's love for our Father and His will.

"How hard it is to be a Christian!" says Browning, hard not because it exacts so much of us, but because it asks so great faith in ourselves. We have not yet attained the fulness of its stature, but we press on toward the mark of our high calling. The law and the rule we find still salutary, as leading us into the freedom of the children of God. But all our religious growth is growth out from under the reign of law, into the dominion of grace. The perfect man, the true Christian, when he comes, will be a man like Jesus; he will be Paul's kind of man, who, in Paul's fine phrase, is delivered from corruptible bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

XV

THE CHOICE OF A VOCATION

FRANKLIN C. SOUTHWORTH

THE CHOICE OF A VOCATION

THE CLAIM OF THE MINISTRY OF RELIGION UPON THE ATTENTION OF YOUNG MEN

I have always believed that it is a piece of presumption for any man to undertake for another the selection of his life work. That selection may be successfully made only by the one who will himself have the work to do. There are occasions, however, when counsel upon this important subject may not be out of place; when, for example, one who has covered not less than half the road which those who are about to begin the journey will have to travel may venture to offer for the benefit of his younger brethren, who are now at the starting-point of their pilgrimage some suggestions to guide them on their way.

One of the most important of these occasions is at the end of a college career. At the time of his graduation from college the young man is accustomed to look out upon a universe which has been tinted with the colors of the rose. He has usually been informed by one or another of the commencement orators that the world is waiting to receive him, that it stands as it were, with open arms and a welcoming smile ready to admit him into any sphere of activity to which his studies have pointed the way.

Then, after commencement, he begins to look about him in order to decide which one of the

various learned professions he shall honor by casting his lot with it. He has been led to believe that great opportunities will lie at his door the moment he receives his parchment and steps out upon the stage of life, the highest product of Twentieth Century culture, a college graduate. But when, after a short period of rest from his final examinations, he turns from the roseate picture which has been held before him by the baccalaureate preacher or the valedictory orator, and seeks some special work which is suited to his particular attainments, he meets his first great disappointment. He then learns, perhaps for the first time, that the world is not standing with open arms waiting for graduates of colleges, and he even conceives the suspicion in some cases that it may not be waiting for anyone at all. The world seems, indeed, to be entirely satisfied with its existing rate of progress, and not to be in any way concerned about the future career of the latest product of academic culture. A number of years ago, when upon a visit to the city of Boston, I called to see a college friend at his office on Tremont Street, three years after he had received his degree in law. He came of a good Boston family, had been an able student and had spent seven years at Harvard. So when I entered his sanctum it was with pleasant anticipations of finding him surrounded by his clients, engaged in the successful practice of his profession. He sat there, however, quite alone, with his

feet upon the desk and an expression of resignation on his face; and when I asked him how he enjoyed the practice of law, he replied: "Well, Southworth, to tell the honest truth, it is not what it was cracked up to be." And when I found that he had been sitting in an attitude of similar expectancy for three weary years, waiting for the clients who had not come, I was unable to controvert his statement. The world seems not to be waiting for anyone in particular during these strenuous modern times. Lawyers are frequently obliged to wait for clients and physicians for patients and teachers for positions; but I have yet to hear of an American city which has been compelled to advertise in the newspapers for more doctors or lawyers, and I have never yet learned of a vacancy in the teaching force of a reputable school for which there did not at once appear a goodly number of applicants. I speak of these callings, moreover, only by way of illustration; for they are not more seriously overcrowded than the other walks of life. The fact is that a man who fills a long-felt want in this Twentieth Century has to make a place for himself. Happy is he who succeeds in creating for himself the right place; who discovers, in other words, some niche that he can fill in this varied universe better than any other human being.

It might be well, if there were time, to call the roll of the various callings which now have some proper claim upon the attention of college men.

Since, however, the space at my disposal does not suffice, I shall ask you instead to consider with me the three professions to which college men in the past have most largely turned, namely: law, medicine and the ministry, and then pass to the consideration of some of the principles which should guide us in the selection of a life-work, whatever that work may be. You will naturally expect me to present more fully the claims of the calling with which my own lot has been cast. I shall try, however, to be fair, and to interpret each vocation in the light of its largest possibilities and its foremost representatives.

Looked at, therefore, in its largest sense, what is the office of the law and the function of the lawyer? It is, is it not, to do what he can to regulate human conduct according to principles of justice — at least so far as externals are concerned? In a free country men are left to regulate their conduct largely for themselves so long as they do not infringe upon the rights of their neighbors. Since, however, laws are necessary even in such a country as this in order to prevent injustice and the oppression of the weak by the strong, lawyers come into existence whose function it is to interpret the law and help in its administration. Justice, in other words, is the great word of the lawyer. To create a condition in human affairs in which justice shall be triumphant, is the end and aim of his activity.

Thus the dignity of the lawyer's calling takes

its rise from the fact that that calling is bound up in our thought with the majesty of the law itself, with the protection it offers the weak against the strong, with the punishment it metes out to the criminal and the vindication it gives to him who has been wrongfully accused. The high-minded attorney may take satisfaction in the fact that he is at his best a minister of justice, that through his efforts an eternal principle is vindicated, that by virtue of what he does in the performance of his daily task, the ties which bind man to man are knit more closely together and society becomes a more perfect and a more stable thing.

Such is the conception of the law and the lawyer's function at its highest. There is, however, unhappily, in this noble calling, as in other spheres of human activity, a wide gulf between the lawyer's vocation as it is in actual experience and this conception of what it would seem that it ought to be. For, although the law is concerned with the infallible, eternal principles, the lawyer is compelled to deal with altogether fallible human beings. Though he may be himself supremely desirous that the right shall prevail, his services are frequently subsidized by individuals or corporations who are interested only that their side shall win. Ideally he is working with the loftiest motives and for the holiest ends. Practically he finds himself enlisted altogether too often under the banner of some soulless cor-

poration whose victory will bring disaster and ruin to the homes of the helpless and the innocent. He believes in great principles, but he is compelled to fight in the interest of others for petty personal ends. Between the ideal possibilities of his vocation as he conceives them in the beginning, and the actual tasks in which it compels him to engage, there is a wide gulf fixed.

The legal profession, however, is not the only one in which such a gulf exists. Let us turn, for example, from the law to medicine in order that we may note the situation here. In this profession there is surely an opportunity for heroic and disinterested service. To stand by the bedside of the sick and suffering, to wrestle with the fell disease which wastes the human form and banishes the light from the eye, to give one's days and often also one's nights to the task of rescuing his fellowmen from the grasp of the destroyer; this is a work that may well appeal to the courage and the enthusiasm of the young and strong. In medicine, however, even as in the law and in any other life-work which we might name, there exists a chasm between the work of the physician when viewed from afar and the same work regarded at close range. I think, however, that I may make this distinction clearer by asking you to compare and to contrast with me for a few minutes the two callings upon which our attention has been fixed with the one with which I am more directly

concerned, and for which I bespeak your special interest to-day.

The ministry is like the law in the fact that it deals with eternal principles, principles which are enthroned on high and which ought to be supreme in the world in which we live. But the work of the minister is unlike that of the lawyer, in that instead of dealing with the external manifestations of these principles he is dealing with their manifestation in the human soul. The lawyer is interested in human conduct so far as it is concerned with the laws of the State. The minister is interested in human conduct in so far as it is an index of the human heart. One is external and legal — the other is internal and spiritual. Let me illustrate the thought I have in mind by a New Testament incident. Jesus had been engaged in making clear to a group of men the conditions which were to exist in the kingdom of God. He had been engaged, in other words, in setting forth certain moral and religious principles which underlie human society and human happiness. While in the midst of this discourse he is interrupted by a request that he serve as arbiter in a petty dispute which had arisen between two brethren, each of whom was, presumably, trying to get the better of the other in the division of a common heritage. "Who made me a ruler or divider over you?" were the stern words with which Jesus greeted this request.

And then, in order to divert their minds from the question of personal advantage to the underlying principle by which the dispute might promptly have been decided, he added, "Take heed and beware of covetousness," realizing that if each of the brethren desired for himself only what was right, the dispute would promptly come to an end.

A similar comparison and contrast are possible in the case of medicine and the ministry. They are alike in that the minister, like the doctor, is a healer of disease; but in the one case it is bodily, while in the other case it is moral disease with which we have to deal. One is seeking to make out of his patient a perfect animal, the other would transform him into a perfect man. The physician concerns himself wholly with the body; the minister's chief business is not with the body, but with the soul.

Once more with reference to the conditions of the men with whom the representatives of these so-called learned professions come in contact in their daily walk. I am compelled to believe that the lawyer and the doctor are all too often brought in contact with their fellowmen upon the lower side of their natures. The lawyer's assistance is invoked as a rule in a battle against the State or against a corporation or against an individual, when the worst passions of men are in the ascendant and when plowshares have been made over into swords and pruning hooks into

spears. The physician likewise is brought in contact with his fellowmen not in their normal healthy state, but when they have been weakened by suffering and made querulous by pain. One of the splendid privileges of the Christian minister is that of knowing men at their best and highest. Viewing men as he does not as bodies but as souls, he tends to idealize man. Thinking of man as the child of God with infinite possibilities before him and capable of indefinite progress, he continually summons him from what he is to what he may become. The man who has faith in his fellowmen helps to create in them that in which he himself believes. He knows his fellowmen at their best. They impart to him their hopes and make him a sharer in their aspirations.

I would not have you believe, however, for a moment, that the life of the Christian minister is devoid of struggle. He gathers around himself, indeed, those elements of the community which make for sobriety, for temperance, for purity, for civic and social righteousness. But it is not in order that he may enjoy with them a life of intellectual or even spiritual companionship undisturbed by the thought of the sin and sorrow of which the world is full. The true minister does not hold himself aloof from the misery and wickedness of the world. He prefers to attack it, however, if he is wise, not singlehanded but with his church behind him, that is, with the assistance

of a company of people who are working with him for the coming of the kingdom of God, and who will enable him to strike when the time comes with the strength not of one, but of a hundred men.

We have been observing these three professions thus far only in their general outlines. Let us turn now for a few minutes to observe the representatives of these callings while engaged in their daily tasks — the lawyer in his office looking up the law, consulting precedents, conferring with clients or laboring with the judge or jury: the physician with his microscope or his medical journal, or with his patients in the sick room or the hospital: the minister in his study among his books or going to and fro among his people, or engaged in the public tasks which fall to his lot as the servant of the community, or conducting the solemn rite which unites two souls for better or for worse, or speaking the last tender words over the bier of the dead, or voicing from week to week the hopes and aspirations of his people in the service of the church, or proclaiming the message which has been entrusted to him in his function as interpreter of God's eternal truth. I would not commend the ministerial calling at the expense of any other. I would say no word to detract from the inducements which are offered by other branches of human activity. But I am constrained to ask where among them all can one find the opportunity which the ministry af-

fords of meeting face to face in his daily work the absorbingly interesting question of man's nature and mission and destiny, and of God's past and present revelation of Himself to man. In what other work are you admitted so without question to the hearts and firesides of noble men and women and made the intimate of their family circle? Where else is a similar opportunity accorded to any man of standing from week to week before an audience of sympathetic friends, and of interpreting some portion of God's infinite truth in terms of the finite personalities he sees before him?

It is possible in other callings as well as in the ministry to form abiding and sacred friendships; but rarely do such opportunities come as are enjoyed by the minister as a legitimate portion of his day's work. In other walks of life men may read by way of recreation an edifying work of fiction or an inspiring poem or gaze upon a beautiful painting. Where is the man, however, in any other sphere of activity, for whom the story or the poem or the picture will play so important and necessary a part in the regular work of the week? Every new vision of beauty, every fresh glimpse into the secrets of the human heart, makes the minister just so much the more a competent pastor and an abler preacher.

This brings me to another aspect of the minister's life which has always been to me one of the secrets of its abiding charm — and that is

that one never tires of it. It is a pathetic moment in a man's career when he gets tired of the work of his life, but I never knew a minister who was weary of his calling. In this calling as in every other there are at times men who, for one reason or another, do not succeed. But even when they realize their failure they art apt to cling to their work and to leave it only with the most poignant regret. The privilege of really ministering to human souls, of awakening the divinity which is always present though sometimes slumbering in every human heart, or rescuing men from sin and pointing them toward God, this privilege, when once it has been enjoyed, is relinquished only with a sense of infinite loss. Men may indeed become weary *in* the work of the ministry, but in so far as one is a true minister his work is something that he can never get weary *of*.

I am always conscious in the discussion of this subject that objections to the ministry are arising in the minds of at least a portion of one's audience, and that these objections, entertained seriously as they are, by many earnest and thoughtful young men, are driving every year into other callings those who might otherwise as Christian preachers have been of incalculable service to their fellowmen. Most of these objections are the result of the failure to understand the situation as it is. Before proceeding farther I should

like to ask you to consider some of them with me briefly, but candidly.

"I am not good enough to be a minister," is the declaration which comes first and foremost. Now, there are two quite different things which such a statement may mean. If you mean by it that you are living by conscious resolution by other than the highest standards, that knowing the better you deliberately choose the worse, that realizing as you do the meaning of the age-long process by which humanity has risen from protoplasm to beings who will and love and contemplate themselves as immortal souls and "think God's thoughts after Him," if realizing this you have nevertheless decided to turn your face away from God and toward the brute — then I agree that the work of the Christian ministry is not for you. This means, however, just as clearly that you have decided to be something less than a man. If, however, on the contrary, your feeling that you are not good enough to be a minister is the result of your realization that you have failed thus far to attain the full stature of a child of God, it may be that your realization of just this fact is a part of your equipment. A minister must, after all, be a man. He certainly should not be less, and it is impossible that he should be more. He is fallible like other human beings, is still chained to earth by his animal inheritance; he makes mistakes; falls sometimes to

rise again; has to battle with his prejudices and passions; is humiliated often by lapses from his own high standards; and yet in spite of it all persistently follows their guiding gleam with his eyes fixed on the goal, which is nothing less than the high calling of God. Such a one is sometimes more efficient as a religious guide from the very fact that he knows in his own experience what temptation and struggle mean. Study the lives of the great preachers of the Christian Church and you will see how intensely human they were. Surely the men whom Jesus gathered about him to be the apostles of the new religion were not saints in the modern sense. They indulged at times in petty personal disputes; one of them denied him, another betrayed him, and in the hour of his greatest need nearly all of them abandoned him; and yet it was out of such religious leadership as this that there grew the greatest religion in history. Do not therefore, I beg of you, turn aside from the ministry of religion because you feel that you have not yet arrived at your ideal of goodness. If you were, on the contrary, quite sure that you are good enough to be a minister, I should try to divert you into some other sphere of activity. For the ministry has altogether too many men who seem quite satisfied with their own goodness at the present time.

Another objection frequently met is the lack of time or money necessary for adequate preparation for religious leadership. As to the matter

of time the question is simply how much the thing is worth for which the time is demanded. Jesus was willing to devote thirty years to his preparation for a ministry which lasted from one to three years. The Church needs better ministers than it has had in the past, and it requires time to prepare them adequately for the work before them. But is there any other way in which time may be more gloriously employed? You may, perhaps, have been accustomed to think of a school of theology as a place where a company of young men, well stocked with piety, though deficient in vitality and devoid of interest in mundane affairs, come together to be instructed by a group of aged men in certain mysteries which may in the distant past have had some human interest, but which long ago ceased to have any connection with the world in which we live. But if that is the picture you have drawn of a modern school of theology, please banish it at once from your mind, for there is no institution in the world more essentially modern and more essentially human. The chief present concern of such a school is not man as he was two thousand years ago, but man as he is to-day; man as he is at his lowest and man as he may become at his highest. How may we realize in our own day and generation Christ's great vision of God's kingdom? What is there in the human mind or human heart that stands in the way of its coming? What change in the present social order will the coming of His king-

dom involve? Do you not see that these questions plunge us into the midst of the social problem of our time, and that they are essentially questions of the present day which stand at the very center of our modern life? It is surely desirable, therefore, that the time of the theological student should be given to such considerations along with his study of theology and the Bible and the intensely interesting history of the Christian religion and the other religions of the world. For many a thoughtful lover of his fellowmen who is now in the maelstrom of a business or professional career from which he cannot turn aside even for a season, the privilege of spending three or four years apart from the noise and bustle of the world in meditation upon the central themes of human life and destiny, under the guidance of devout and scholarly men, would be hailed as unspeakably precious. Yet no one to whom that privilege has not been given can realize how precious it is. To the candidate for the Christian ministry this privilege is given without money and without price.

For our schools of theology have realized from the beginning that the ministry is not a money-making pursuit. It is true that the graduate of the seminary, unlike the graduate of a school of law or medicine, is able to find at once a place provided for him, a congregation to which to minister and an income which is adequate for his legitimate wants. In this calling

youth is not a crime, not even a disadvantage. On the contrary, the young minister is apt to be at once in demand. But it is also true that the salary he receives is looked upon not as a means of amassing wealth, but as a means of support. It has, therefore, been deemed just and proper that when one sets himself apart for this work of service, that branch of the church which he is to serve should make provision by means of scholarships or other financial aid for his support during his period of apprenticeship. Such a support is in considerable measure provided by all the seminaries of this country. No earnest and capable man need consider himself debarred from the privileges they offer on account of the lack of money.

A third objection to a ministerial career is the doctrinal one. "I am not sure that I believe," you tell me, "in the creeds which the church imposes. They seem to fetter my freedom of thought and to stand between me and the truth of God." I approach this question diffidently, because it is one in which the different branches of the Christian church do not as yet see eye to eye. It is a matter in which not even the theological seminaries have as yet been able to take their stand upon common ground. Two things, however, are becoming constantly clearer: first, that more and more stress is laid by the churches upon Christian character as of more importance than doctrinal beliefs; and second, that in some

branches of the Christian church, if not in all, there is to be in the future a place for the devout and sincere minister who dissents from the majority of his fellow Christians in matters of theological doctrine. As there is a place for such a man in the church, so there is also in the seminary a growing tendency to receive as candidates for the ministry not simply those who feel that they have already attained final convictions in religion, but also those who are still uncertain about many things, but who with open minds are ready to follow wherever the truth shall lead.

The fourth objection is, as I believe, the result of a widely prevalent but mistaken notion about the minister's work. "I have not received a call to be a minister," you tell me. But what constitutes this call? Is it an external voice speaking to the outer ear, or an overwhelming experience stirring you to the depth of your being, and leaving no doubt in your mind that in this experience there is the veritable hand of God? To some men, we are told, such experiences have come. But they are rare. They have failed, as a rule, to come to those whose labors in the ministry have been blessed with the largest results. Phillips Brooks, that giant among the preachers of the gospel in our land, the greatest America has yet produced, decided to enter a seminary and study for the ministry only after protracted conference with friends, and the careful weighing of the pros and cons, joined to a disastrous fail-

ure as a teacher in the Boston Latin School. Frederic Robertson, of Brighton, England's most influential preacher of the Nineteenth Century, had set his heart upon a military career, and decided to enter Oxford for theological study only on account of the urgent entreaties of his father, and after the army commission that he had hoped for had failed to materialize. The experience of such men as these is sufficient to demonstrate that the only real call to the ministry is the possession of the qualities and the character that are needed in the work of the ministry.

But a fifth and final objection cuts deeper still. It implies a thorough-going doubt as to the permanence of the preacher's office and the future of the church itself. "Is it not possible," you ask, "that some other institution may eventually usurp the place which the church has held?" It is seen that strong and earnest men are working as never before for human betterment outside of the church. Upon many such men the church has no longer any hold, though they have united in secular organizations, either social or philanthropic, in the interest of many of the causes which the church at its best would fain promote.

The question is a fair one, but it is not unanswerable. The form of the church's activity may, it is true, be obliged to adjust itself to the changed conditions of the times. That work, indeed, should be a challenge to the consecrated

youth of our own day into whose hands as ministers of the new era the work must be committed. That men should cease to meet together, however, in some way or other, as members of the church of God, as brethren in a common family, and as sons of a common Father, is to me inconceivable. It was just as natural that the disciples of Jesus should unite to form a church as it was that the disciples of Socrates should unite to form a School.

There are signs, moreover, that the great days of the pulpit are in the future. For more than a thousand years it has been affirmed from time to time that the golden days for preaching have passed. But inevitably has some prophet arisen, from the days of Chrysostom and Augustine to those of Channing and Beecher, to prove the statement false. "So you are intending to enter the ministry, are you?" said a railroad magnate a few years ago to the son of a leading university president, when that young man sought the advice of this old family friend as to his future career. "Why don't you go into some profession which deals with realities?" I submit the question here, what are the realities of life? Do they consist of railroad stocks and bonds, which are up to-day and down to-morrow, or are the realities of life those hopes and fears, and loves and aspirations which constitute our working and sleeping selves? It is with such things as these that the true prophet deals, and in our own days, as well as in

the years which have passed, whoever plays upon the chords of love and reverence and aspiration and draws forth harmony, will be listened to with breathless interest; and wheresoever a man arises in whose heart there burns the true prophetic fire, men will gather about him as they have gathered of yore in order to be taught the way in which to walk.

"While swings the sea, while mists the mountain shroud,
While thunder's surges burst on cliffs of cloud,
Still at the prophets' feet the nations sit."

And now a word as to when the choice of a vocation should be made, and as to the class of men to which the ministry ought particularly to appeal. Make your choice, I beg of you, in your best and highest moments, when you see life clearly and see it whole. Matthew Arnold has truly told us,

"The tasks in hours of insight willed
May be in hours of gloom fulfilled."

Do not make your choice, therefore, when you are cast down by discouragement or weakened by failure, or depressed by doubt. Make it, on the contrary, at the moment of your supremest faith in yourself, when you realize that God needs your coöperation in order that His kingdom may come and His will may be done. Then, having

chosen, judge your profession in the light of its noblest representatives, not perhaps in the light of those who are most prominent, but in the light of those who most perfectly embody the ideal of what you wish to be. For one unconsciously grows to resemble in thought and deed those whom he most admires.

I have no hesitation in saying that there are those, as it seems to me, to whom the Christian ministry can make no legitimate appeal. The ministry has no valid claim upon the young man who has lost his ideals, who is destitute of enthusiasm, who is unwilling to give himself passionately without thought of the consequences to some great unselfish work. It has no need of the youth who plays no games, who makes no friends, who is only languidly interested in life, and who gets weary with every serious task before it is half done. It does not need the man who, already at the age of twenty or twenty-two, has ceased to believe in woman's virtue or man's fidelity or the capacity of his fellows to work together unselfishly for the common good. It does not require the man to whom the jingle of the guinea is a sweeter sound than the commendation of his conscience when its still, small voice utters the words, "Well done," nor for whom the amassing of a fortune is a more alluring task than playing the part of a real man in life's engrossing drama.

The ministry does need the man who is capable of generous emotions and noble enthu-

siasms. It has work for him to do who has not lost faith in the capacity of his fellowmen for high achievements, who is essentially an optimist, believing that the best which has yet been attained is but a promise of something better that is to come — the man who sees visions and dreams dreams, and then is willing to work and wait that the vision may become a reality. Such a man as this, living in the beginning of this glorious Twentieth Century, a citizen of a free republic that is vibrating from center to circumference with new ambitions, and awakening to a consciousness of new opportunities will feel that it is a splendid privilege to have a part in the great creative work that is entrusted to the Christian minister in this critical epoch in the world's history.

Such a man, moreover, will give a larger and broader interpretation to the ministry of religion than has ever been given in the past. Religion has been represented as a method of escaping penalties, or as a revelation to a chosen few, or as something to be attained by prayers or sacraments or ceremonials. Though religion may be all of these things, it is something inexpressibly greater. Have no fear lest religion may, at some future time, disappear from the earth, for, as has been truly said, "Man is incurably religious." Religion is a mighty force that has come to us from far down the centuries, gathering impetus and power as it has advanced. It has enthroned

and dethroned monarchs. It has made and unmade empires. The work of the minister of religion is to bring this force to fruition in the time in which we live; in the creation of finer characters, in the molding of a more perfect society, in making Christ's great law of love to God and man a present reality in this work-a-day world.

And, finally, I would press the question home upon the hearts and consciences of any young man or woman to whom these words may come, what is the thing which you wish to do more than anything else with the life that God has given you? Look with me, if you can, a score of years ahead down into the early part of the 1930's, when the young men of to-day will already have reached middle life with youth left far behind. How will it be at that time with the ideals of your youth? Will they also have vanished in the flight of years? Will the bright vision of your college days have given place to the self-satisfaction of material prosperity, and will the lust of power and greed for gain, or the desire for the praise of men, find you twenty years from now bereft of the generous hopes and enthusiasms which are yours to-day? How often, alas, in human experience has this proven true! "How many young men," says Mazzini, "have I not met at the commencement of their career glowing with enthusiasm and filled with the poetry of great enterprises, whom I see to-day precocious old men, with the wrinkles of cold calculation

upon their brows, calling themselves free from illusion when they are only disheartened, and practical when they are only commonplace." One of the saddest moments which can come to a human being is that in which he leaves his ideals behind, when he sees the vision of his youth vanishing before his eyes, as one of the illusions which was too good to be true.

To every man who goes forth to his life work the choice is offered between the various ideals which have made their appeals for ages to the minds and hearts of men. It is at this time that there come trooping before him, as if in a gorgeous procession, the different objects of desire which have a claim to make upon his allegiance. Fame comes, declaring that if he will walk her way his name will be blazoned abroad and his deeds will be praised throughout his lifetime by great numbers of his fellowmen. Wealth comes, telling him of the possibilities of power and ease that lie before him if he will go with her. Pleasure appears, arrayed in glittering apparel, and presenting an enticing picture of the gifts which her hands may bestow. And last of all, after the procession, with all its pomp and pageantry has come almost to an end, there appears a more modest figure with little outward adornment, who tells him when he asks her who she is: "My name is Service. The path in which I walk is sometimes rough and sometimes steep and sometimes narrow. The man who follows me therein

is not always greeted with acclamations from the crowd, nor are palm-branches strewn before him as he advances. But if you choose the path in which I tread, your way will be lit by the light of divine ideals. You will be confronted as you proceed by many obstacles. At times the sun will hide its face, and the moon will no longer send down its beams, and you will be compelled to struggle forward in the darkness, unaided and alone. But as you proceed the darkness will be relieved from time to time by the light of the hearts which you have gladdened by the way, and if you continue on your course the path will grow ever smoother and the light ever brighter unto the perfect day." I would invite you to this way of service as the only way to fulness of life, the way to the achievement of true manhood and womanhood, to the attainment of life's choicest pleasures and life's richest rewards.

And upon the attention of some of you at least, I wish I might say many of you, I would urge the ministry of religion, not as the only way of service, but as one of the avenues of service which is worthy of consideration by the best and bravest of our American youth. Has some thought come to you, as thoughts used to come to the prophets of old, from out of the depths of your experience, in one of those mysterious ways in which God works upon the human soul; some

thought which makes the horizon of your life broader, its mountain peak more majestic, its duties more commanding? This thought was given you not for your private delectation. It was given as a trust to hold for the benefit of your fellowmen. Paul, the Apostle, after he had become convinced of the truth of the gospel of Jesus, saw in his imagination a man from Macedonia holding out to him mute hands of entreaty and seeming to beg him to come to that distant land as a messenger of the new faith.

To become conscious of the need even on the part of people in a foreign land meant for him to resolve at once, whatever personal hardship it might involve, to go to their relief. To-day it is not from foreign lands alone that the cry comes to our ears for preachers of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. The church of Jesus Christ needs leaders in the land in which we live — needs them as she has rarely needed them before, needs more men and better men for the inspiring work of emancipation that confronts her, in the new era which we are entering. God grant that the cry may come with increasing power to those whose ears it ought to reach, and that, more and more, as there dawns upon the mind of any earnest man, an uplifting idea or illuminating thought, there may come into his heart at the same time a consuming desire to incarnate that thought in the ever changing, ever growing life

of his fellowmen. This privilege is in a measure that of every child of God. It is the special privilege of him to whom it has been permitted to become a minister of the Christian Church.

XVI

RETRIBUTION HERE AND HEREAFTER

WILLIAM H. FISH

RETRIBUTION HERE AND HEREAFTER

In the sixty-second Psalm we read, "Unto thee belongeth mercy, for thou renderest unto every man according to his work." The doctrine of everlasting punishment, as it has been commonly taught in the church, is plainly inconsistent with these words. That a Being who punishes the sins committed in this short life with an infinite penalty does not render to every man according to his work, and that such a Being cannot be properly called merciful, is coming to be more and more clearly recognized by many in all denominations. Never before in the history of the world has there been so deep and widespread a faith in the goodness and mercy of God as there is at the present time. Never before has there been so earnest an effort to bring the doctrines of the church into harmony with the divine revelation in the human heart.

Nevertheless, is it not possible that there is loss as well as gain in this advance? Do those who are called Liberal Christians sufficiently appreciate the absolute inflexibility of the eternal justice? Do we always clearly see that He to whom mercy belongs must render to every man exactly according to his work, whether it be good or evil? This is a side of the question which we too often overlook. In the earnestness with which we urge the importance of doing right because

it is right, we are apt to leave out of view those considerations in regard to consequences which we are really bound, as reasonable beings, to take into account. We cannot indeed make too great a demand on the infinite riches of divine love; nor can we insist too strongly on the obligation resting upon us to do right under all circumstances whatever the result to ourselves may be. But it would certainly help us to a better understanding of the way in which the love of God operates, it would immensely strengthen and confirm our good purposes, if we could somehow get a clearer and deeper insight into the working of the great law of consequences in the moral world.

In the natural world we learn very early to appreciate its importance. Even infants begin to understand it. "The burnt child dreads the fire," because it has found out by painful experience something about this great law. Much of our early education is of a similar character. In our relations with the outward world, as we gradually discover, the law of consequences is absolutely invariable. This lesson is repeated so often and in so many ways that it seems at last to form a part of our consciousness, and all our calculations are based upon it. On the thoroughness with which we learn it, indeed, our very existence depends. If the farmer did not know that the wheat which he sows in the spring would produce wheat, and not grass or weeds, he would

have little motive for exertion and would soon starve. In this department of activity and in every other branch of industry — in all the professions also — nearly every act is performed with tacit reference to the invariability of the law of consequences.

In morals it is often otherwise. In the moral domain there are many persons who expect to reap where they have not sown and to gather where they have not strewed. Is it not so? Look around and see. Here is one man intent upon cheating his neighbor; another going about whispering slanderous tales from ear to ear; a third leading an impure life; a fourth showing the foulness within himself by filling the air with foul language. Do they, and others like them, expect any evil consequences to follow from such acts? Practically they do not; they count, indeed, upon gaining certain advantages of pleasure or profit without experiencing any counterbalancing drawbacks. But they are doomed to disappointment. The law of consequences does not operate with infallible accuracy in other departments to fail for the first and only time here. Without dwelling on the remorse which we must surely suffer, sooner or later, for every wrong of which we are guilty, we can easily see after a moment's reflection what are some of the worst and most serious of the evil effects which evil causes inevitably produce. The man who cheats his neighbor, to return to one of the cases al-

ready mentioned, expects, provided he is not found out, to be better off than before on account of the unfair advantage he has taken. But what is the actual fact? The actual fact is that one act of dishonesty prepares the way for a second and makes it a great deal easier than it would otherwise have been. When two such acts have been committed a third is almost sure to follow, and before long a dishonest habit is formed which becomes a part of the man's character. Is not that an evil? He does not feel it to be so, you may say. Perhaps not, at the present moment, but what of that? Are there no evils except those of which we are immediately conscious? The professional thief or burglar may not be sensible of the evil of his condition; he has sunk into it by such gradual steps that he is quite unconscious that his character has undergone any important change since the days of his innocent childhood. But do you envy him his state of mind? Would you exchange places and personalities with him for any consideration of which you can possibly conceive? To know just how God renders to such a man according to his work it would be necessary to understand his most secret thoughts. But who that knows the peace of a mind conscious of perfect integrity can fail to look with pity upon one in his condition?

Look at another case. How common is the habit of exaggeration for the sake of producing an effect. Many of us are or have been tempted

to fall into it. What possible harm can there be, perhaps we say to ourselves when we are anxious to make some fact or incident that we are relating interesting to our audience — what possible harm can there be in adding a few details drawn from the imagination rather than the memory to make the story more impressive or picturesque? Who can be harmed by such a trifle? Unquestionably we shall be harmed in a way of which, it may be, we little dream, if we yield to that temptation — if, while professing to give a truthful account of what we have seen or heard, we consciously make statements that are not true. We have doubtless all known persons in whose word we have never been able to place the slightest confidence — habitual liars. Perhaps we have looked upon them with that half-contemptuous feeling of superiority which is so often the attitude of those who think themselves strong toward the weak. Have we ever stopped to ask how they have been reduced to so deplorable a condition? In many cases, without doubt, the evil begins in yielding to just such temptations as those which at first seem of such trifling importance. Conscious inaccuracy becomes after a while unconscious inaccuracy. Those who are guilty of it are in time unable to tell the truth — unable, at last, to distinguish between truth and falsehood; and to this result every exaggerated statement that they have made has directly contributed. So the law of consequences, from which there is

no more hope of escape than from the law of gravitation, has again its fulfilment.

Take one more example. It is a part of the retribution that falls upon those who live chiefly for material interests that their spiritual perceptions are weakened and sometimes almost destroyed. Such men are commonly as unconscious as the thief or the habitual liar of the evil state to which they have reduced themselves. They do not realize that there is anything exceptional in it and they fancy their own condition to be that of all mankind. Because they have no power of spiritual vision they think other men must be equally blind, and they regard those who speak of things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard as either hypocrites or fools.

The most serious feature in the operation of the law of consequences still remains to be mentioned. It is the lasting and far-reaching effect which our evil deeds produce upon other people. How many wrecks of humanity — men and women once pure and innocent, now vile and degraded — are encountered in a walk through certain districts of a great city. Beyond all doubt many of these miserable creatures, ruined in body and soul alike, were at first the victims, rather than the voluntary partners, of the sins of others; and whenever a man who has made himself responsible for the destruction of another's life is brought to a realizing sense of his guilt and becomes inspired with a desire and purpose to make atone-

ment for it, how terrible must be the retribution which he suffers when he discovers that it is apparently irreparable — that the lives which he has destroyed are beyond the reach of any influence for good which he can now exert.

Can we believe that mercy belongs to Him who has ordained this law? Is it a God of love — our Heavenly Father — who visits our offenses with so heavy a penalty? Before we try to answer this question we must recall the fact that the law has another side — that it is the great law of progress. So far it appears to be only a gigantic agency for increasing and spreading the power of evil. But it is just as effective in the opposite direction. If an evil cause is surely followed by an evil effect, a good cause is just as surely followed by a good effect. If dishonesty, lying, and other sins tend to become habitual and produce after their kind, so do honesty, truthfulness, and other virtues tend to become habitual and produce after their kind. God rendereth to the good man according to his work as well as to the evil man according to his work. By virtue of this law the good actions which are at first done with painful effort in time so form the character that they are performed spontaneously, without even the trouble of thinking about them; and so the will is left free to fight new battles and gain new victories to be assured in the same way. What habitually truthful person has to try to tell the truth in any

individual instance? What man in whom temperance has been the unvarying practice of his life ever has to try to avoid the enticements of the saloon? Even the greatest spiritual blessings are assured to us by this law. As James Freeman Clarke says, "By trusting God when we hardly see Him at all, we come at last to realize, as by another sense, His presence in all things. By praying to Him when we can only say, 'O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul,' we at last learn to talk with this Heavenly Friend as we would with an earthly friend. . . . Faith in God, at first an effort, becomes automatic and instinctive,"

Nevertheless, to many this will hardly seem a sufficient vindication of the mercy and love of God if it still remains true that millions of His children are doomed to sink lower and lower in darkness and sin as long as they live — that to multitudes existence will become an unmitigated curse. This would seem to be the logical issue of the law of consequences on the side on which we have chiefly examined its operations; and, indeed, this is the foundation upon which certain representatives of modern orthodoxy base a new argument for the doctrine of eternal punishment. The possession by man of free will, it is said, implies the possibility of sinning, and therefore of suffering, for ever, and as a matter of fact we know that character tends to final permanence. After a certain point is reached, while to the

good virtue becomes the fixed habit of their lives, the bad, as we have seen, are confirmed in their wickedness and even grow more wicked. There are plainly some, therefore, who will fall into that state of permanent dissimilarity with God which constitutes eternal perdition. If Iago and Mephistopheles should repent, they would by that very act be saved, for salvation is similarity with God; and they will not repent. They will sin eternally and they will suffer eternally. The argument is undeniably a strong one — so strong, indeed, that some Unitarian theologians are only saved from accepting the conclusion to which it appears to lead by assuming that the persistently wicked will finally perish — that as conscious individuals, at least, they will cease to exist. This is a way of cutting the knot which appears to me inadmissible.

Is it then true, this doctrine of endless punishment, after all? Are there men and women and little children in this city, in every city, to-day who are destined to be eternally miserable? — to whom existence will become an intolerable burden, from which, nevertheless, they can never hope to escape? Our fathers shuddered at the thought of endless physical pain; but what is that in comparison with the misery of anticipating and enduring through countless millions of millenniums an unbroken succession of the dreadful fruits of sin? "All hope abandon, ye who enter here" is the terrible sentence which will burn in the hearts

of the lost if it be not written above the door of their abode, and in that feeling, since hope is the chief solace and cheer of all human existence, will consist their worst suffering. All this and more must follow if the doctrine of endless punishment is true, in the sense in which it is taught even by modern orthodoxy.

Is it true? Has anything been left out in the reasoning which seems to make it so certain? Nothing, it seems to me, except the two most important of all the elements in the problem, the essential indestructibility of the germ of good, the spark of divinity, that exists in every human soul, and the infinite love of God. "Know ye not," says the apostle, "that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?" The temple may be defiled, the spirit may have ceased to manifest itself, the germ of good may be buried under layer after layer of evil thoughts and evil habits so deep that no trace of its existence seems discoverable. That state of final permanence to which we are told all character tends may apparently have been reached. And yet how many such cases we have known, even within the limits of this short life, in which the hidden germ has been suddenly quickened and the character has been entirely transformed! The seemingly hopeless drunkard has become the ardent temperance apostle, the abandoned profligate, delivered from his evil life, devotes himself to saving others. The records

of the Salvation Army are crowded with such instances. Those who have heard Mrs. Ballington Booth tell the story of her work among the convicts of our state prisons can hardly fail to have gained a new faith in human nature, a new assurance that since she succeeds where so many others have failed, a still greater power for good may reach at last those whom she cannot influence, that every prodigal will finally come to himself and be brought back to the Father's house.

But the greatest mistake of the advocates of the doctrine of endless punishment, in either its modern or its ancient form, is their apparent forgetfulness of the infinite mercy and goodness of God. They seem to imagine that the great drama of the universe can be played with the part of the principal actor left out. Does not the very thought of infinite love dissipate the fogs in which we so easily become involved and burn all these cobwebs of argument from our minds?

There are some things, it is true, which even God cannot do. He cannot reconcile contradictions; He cannot make anything exist and not exist at the same time; He cannot endow man with free will and yet arbitrarily control human choice. But He can, and being what He is, He must, withhold a power of which He knows a fatal use will be made. When Schiller's play, "The Robbers," was first produced, a critic, who

had been highly offended by it, wrote to Goethe somewhat in this fashion: "Had I been the Infinite Being meditating the creation of the world, and had I foreseen that such a work as this would be written in the world which I was about to make, I would have desisted from my purpose and would never have made the world." This was, of course, only an exaggerated expression of disgust. But I believe it may be said in all reverence, in all truth and soberness, that the universe never would have been made as it is if it had been foreseen that it would, or even could, involve the endless misery of a single human soul. Our existence endowed with free will is a guarantee that the Infinite Father knows that we shall all at last make the right choice — that without destroying our freedom He will find means to lead us into the paths of righteousness. Were it otherwise He could not be exonerated from the responsibility for our ruin. "It is as sure a method of killing a man," someone has said, "to give him a rope with which one knows for a certainty that he will hang himself as to stab him or have him stabbed with a dagger." His death is willed as much by one who uses the former method as by one who uses either of the others.

There may seem to be no flaw in the argument which proves eternal punishment, but faith in the living God is not a matter of argument. We do not find Him at the end of a syllogism; we know Him most directly and surely by the witness of

His spirit with our spirits, and if that does not assure us of the omnipotence of love, it is because we as yet fail to comprehend its testimony. There could not be joy in heaven if one sinner were forever lost. A far more tender sympathy, a much greater warmth and disinterestedness of affection must be felt by those who have been advancing for ages, unless our belief in progress is altogether vain, than any that we here know. The greatest earthly happiness can only faintly suggest the delight which the pure and good there must take in lifting up those who are weighed down by the burden of many sins. With more than a mother's love for her first-born, it may well be, they look upon their struggles and yearn for their recovery. To destroy their hope for even the last one would be to put out the light of the universe. If there is an endless hell, although it contain but one occupant, there can be no heaven. A hell there may be — I believe there is — as terrible as any that the imagination has ever painted; but if it is not endless, if its pains are remedial, ordained by God in His mercy as a means of bringing every wanderer "to himself" at last, its existence is not incompatible with joy. Into that hell many enter while they are still on the earth. Some may need ages of its fires of moral purification. There may be those who will for a time grow worse instead of better in the next world, as they have done in this. But God willeth that not any shall perish.

One by one the enemies of our weakness shall be destroyed, all things shall at last be subdued to Him and He shall be all in all.

> "Behold we know not anything.
> I can but trust that good shall fall
> At last — far off — at last to all,
> And every winter turn to spring."